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THE HUNCHBACK

A PLAY, IN FIVE ACTS.

BY

JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES,

Author of "Virginius."

NEW-YORK:

PEABODY & CO. BROADWAY.

1832.



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TO

MAJOR PATRICK CAMPBELL,

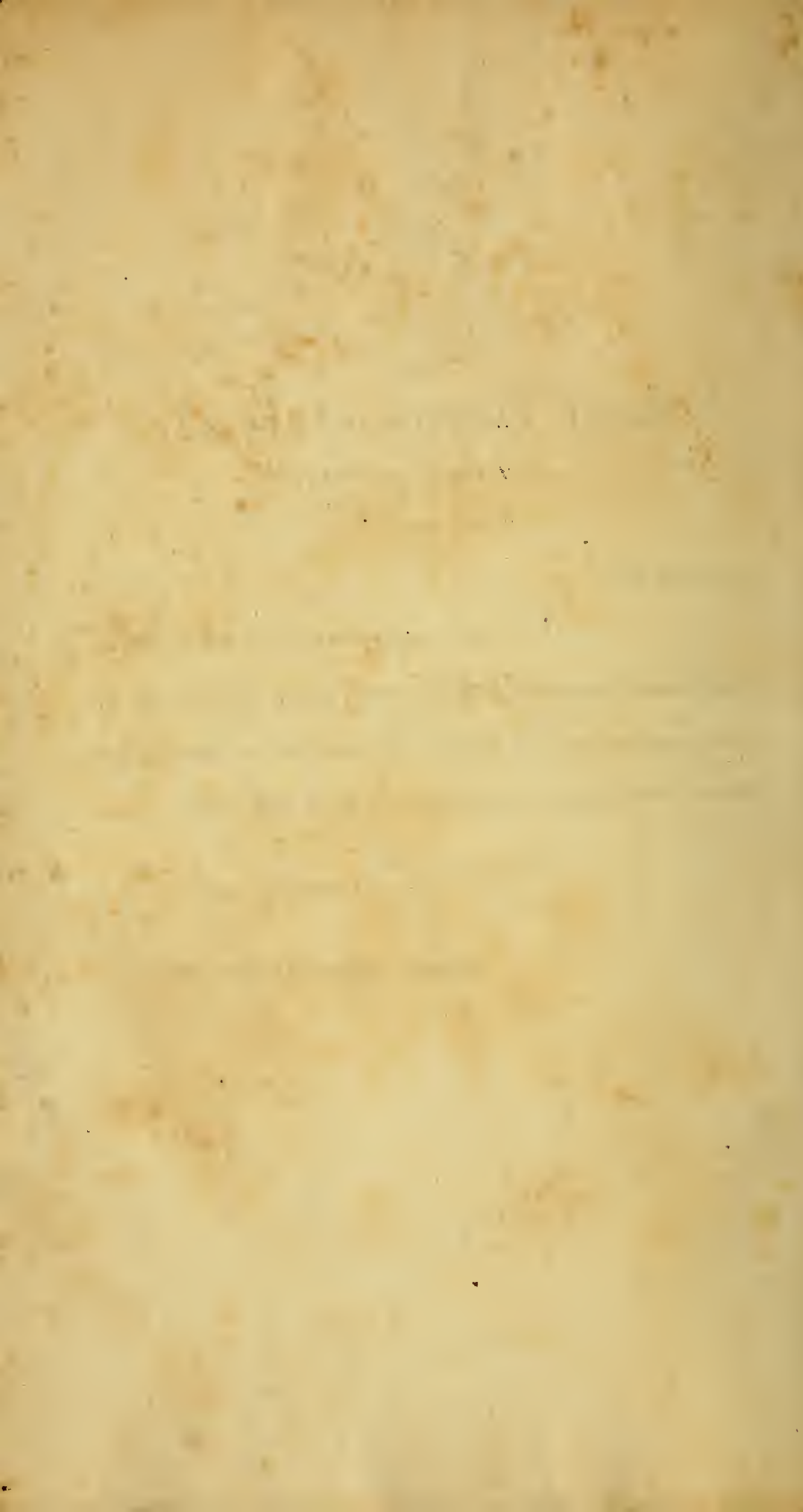
(LATE OF THE 8th, OR KING'S OWN.)

MY DEAR SIR,

As an enthusiastic admirer of the Drama, and as a gentleman, from whom, solely on account of my connexion with it, I have received the most flattering attention, you are entitled to the Dedication of this Play, and it is accordingly inscribed to you,

By your grateful servant,

JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES.



PREFACE.

THIS Comedy owes its existence to the failure of "The Beggar's Daughter of Bethnal Green," which was produced under the most unfavourable circumstances, and in the unavoidable absence of the author. I did not like to be baffled, especially, as I thought, without good reason; and cheered by the generous, enthusiastic advocacy of the editor of the Atlas, (a perfect stranger to me,) I set to work upon The Hunchback.

My friend, Mr. Macready, who was very angry with me for again attempting a walk in which I had failed,—and who came to Glasgow, solely as I believe, for the object of expostulating with me,—was the first to encourage me to proceed. I had completed my first act. I read it to him, and he told me to go on. This I thought the happiest of omens, for many a proof had he given me of his admirable judgment in such things. This happened about two years ago.

It was not, however, until the latter end of the summer of 1831, that I had leisure to proceed with my work. I recommenced it in the pleasant walks about Birmingham, and completed it on the sands of Newhaven—my roomy study, where, at the same time, I remodelled "Alfred." I brought both plays up to town with me in April last.

"The Hunchback" was read to Mr. Lee, and instantly accepted by that gentleman, who, without hesitation, granted me terms even more advantageous than those which I required for it from Covent Garden; and to whose polite and liberal deportment towards me, during his brief, divided reign of management, I joyfully take this opportunity of bearing testimony. The play, however, was defective in the under plot,

which was perfectly distinct from the main one. This error Mr. Macready pointed out to me,—as did subsequently Mr. Morton, in an elaborate critique, as full of kindness as of discrimination. My avocations, however, did not leave me at liberty to revise my work, till about two months ago, when I constructed my under plot anew; and, having done my best to obviate objections, presented “The Hunchback” to Drury Lane, from which establishment I subsequently withdrew it, because it was not treated with the attention which I thought it merited.

Let me take this opportunity of thanking Mr. Farren for the extremely handsome terms in which he spoke of this Comedy previously to its representation, and to express my sincere regret, that the character of *The Hunchback* should have suffered from the loss of his masterly personation of the part,—for masterly it assuredly would have been.

I took my Play to Covent Garden, and from that moment found myself at home indeed and among friends! In little more than a fortnight “*The Hunchback*” was ready,—every way improved by the superintending care of Mr. Bartley: strengthened in effect by curtailment and condensation,—deliberately, and modestly, recommended by him, and thankfully adopted by me. It was produced on Thursday, the 5th of April. It succeeded,—thanks to the actors who so warmly interested themselves in its success,—and to the kind audience who rejoiced with them and me.

And now for brief, but heart-warm acknowledgments. And first to Miss Fanny Kemble: I owe her such a personation of my heroine, as—proud though I was of my offspring—I did not think that heroine afforded scope for. Her Julia has outstripped my most sanguine hopes! Can I say more? Yes, the soul of Siddons breathes its inspiration upon us again. The “Do it!” of Julia, in the elocution of the actress, stands beside the “Hereafter!” of Lady Macbeth—that instance of transcending histrionic display which I never hoped to hear equalled. I could say a great deal more, but I leave it to those who can say it a great deal better, and who are worthier witnesses, because less interested ones.

Miss Taylor has laid me under deep obligations. With all

her heart, and soul, and talent, she advocated my disputed pretensions to the favour of Thalia, and—may I be permitted to say?—established them.

To Mr. Kemble I am deeply indebted for accepting a part, which, I have reason to believe, no other performer of his rank would have accepted as he did, and yet which none could have performed so well. Will the rest of my brother performers be content with my general but cordial acknowledgments?

London, April 14, 1832.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

JULIA	<i>Miss F. Kemble.</i>
HELEN	<i>Miss Taylor.</i>
MASTER WALTER,	<i>Mr. J. Sheridan Knowles</i>
SIR THOMAS CLIFFORD,	<i>Mr. C. Kemble.</i>
LORD TINSEL	<i>Mr. Wrench.</i>
MASTER WILFORD,	<i>Mr. J. Mason.</i>
MODUS,	<i>Mr. Abbot.</i>
MASTER HEARTWELL,	<i>Mr. Evans.</i>
GAYLOVE,	<i>Mr. Henry.</i>
FATHOM,	<i>Mr. Meadows.</i>
THOMAS,	<i>Mr. Barnes.</i>
STEPHEN,	<i>Mr. Payne.</i>
WILLIAMS,	<i>Mr. Irwin.</i>
SIMPSON,	<i>Mr. Brady.</i>
WAITER,	<i>Mr. Heath.</i>
HOLDWELL,	<i>Mr. Bender.</i>

SERVANTS, *Messrs. J. Cooper and Lollett.*

THE HUNCHBACK.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—AT A TAVERN.

On one side SIR THOMAS CLIFFORD, *at a table with wine before him ;*
on the other MASTER WILFORD, GAYLOVE, HOLDWELL, and SIMP-
SON, *likewise taking wine.*

Wilford.—Your wine, Sirs; your wine! you do not justice to mine host of the Three Tuns, nor credit to yourselves; I swear the beverage is good! It is as palatable poison as you will purchase within a mile round Ludgate! Drink, gentlemen; make free. You know I am a man of expectations; and hold my money as light as the purse in which I carry it.

Gaylove.—We drink, Master Wilford; not a man of us has been chased as yet.

Wilford.—But you fill not fairly, Sirs! Look at my measure! Wherefore a large glass, if not for a large draught? Fill, I pray you, else let us drink out of thimbles. This will never do for the friends of the nearest of kin to the wealthiest peer in Britain.

Gaylove.—We give you joy, Master Wilford, of the prospect of advancement which has so unexpectedly opened to you.

Wilford.—Unexpectedly indeed! But yesterday arrived the news that the Earl's only son and heir had died; and to-day has the Earl himself been seized with a mortal illness. His dissolution is looked for hourly: and I, his cousin in only the third degree, known to him but to be unnoticed by him—a decayed gentleman's son—glad of the title and revenues of a scrivener's clerk,—am the undoubted successor to his estates and coronet.

Gaylove.—Have you been sent for?

Wilford.—No; but I have certified to his agent, Master Walter the Hunchback, my existence, and peculiar propinquity; and momentarily expect him here.

Gaylove.—Lives there any one that may dispute your claim, —I mean vexatiously?

Wilford. Not a man, Master Gaylove. I am the sole remaining branch of the family tree.

Gaylove. Doubtless you look for much happiness from this change of fortune?

Wilford. A world! Three things have I an especial passion for—the finest hound, the finest horse, and the finest wife in the kingdom, Master Gaylove.

Gaylove. The finest wife!

Wilford. Yes, Sir; I marry. Once the Earldom comes into my line, I shall take measures to perpetuate its remaining there. I marry Sir! I do not say that I shall love. My heart has changed mistresses too often to settle down in one servitude now, Sir. But fill, I pray you, friends. This, if I mistake not, is the day whence I shall date my new fortunes; and, for that reason, hither have I invited you, that having been so long my boon companions, you should be the first to congratulate me.

Enter WAITER.

Waiter. You are wanted, Master Wilford.

Wilford. By whom?

Waiter. One Master Walter.

Wilford. His Lordship's agent! News, Sirs! Show him in!
[*Exit WAITER.*]

My heart's a prophet, Sirs.—The Earl is dead.

Enter MASTER WALTER.

Well, Master Walter. How accost you me?

Walter. As your impatience shows me you would have me: My lord, the Earl of Rochdale!

Gaylove. Give you joy!

Holdwell. All happiness, my lord!

Simpson. Long life and health unto your lordship!

Gaylove. Come!

We'll drink to his lordship's health! 'Tis two o'clock,
We'll e'en carouse till midnight! Health, my lord!

Holdwell. My lord, much joy to you!

Simpson. All good to your lordship!

Walter. Give something to the dead!

Gaylove. Give what?

Walter. Respect!

He has made the living ! First to him that's gone,
Say "Peace,"—and then with decency to revels.

Gaylove. What means the knave by revels ?

Walter. Knave !

Gaylove. Ay, knave !

Walter. Go to ! Thou'rt flush'd with wine !

Gaylove. Thou sayest false !

Tho' didst thou need a proof thou speakest true,
I'd give thee one. Thou seest but one lord here,
And I see two !

Walter. Reflect'st thou on my shape ?

Thou art a villain !

Gaylove. (*starting up.*) Ha !

Walter.—A coward too !

Draw ! (*Drawing his sword.*)

Gaylove.—Only mark him ! how he struts about !

How laughs his strait sword at his noble back.

Walter.—Does it ? It cuffs thee for a liar then ! (*Strikes
Gaylove with his sword.*)

Gaylove.—A blow !

Walter.—Another, lest you doubt the first !

Gaylove.—His blood on his own head ! I'm for you, Sir !
(*Draws.*)

Clifford.—Hold, Sir ! This quarrel's mine ! (*Coming for-
ward and drawing.*)

Walter.—No man shall fight for me, Sir !

Clifford.—By your leave.

Your patience pray ! My lord, for so I learn
Behoves me to accost you—for your own sake
Draw off your friend !

Walter. Not 'till we have a bout, Sir !

Clifford. My lord, your happy fortune ill you greet !
Ill greet it those who love you—greeting thus
The herald of it !

Walter. Sir, what's that to you ?

Let go my sleeve !

Clifford. My lord, if blood be shed
On the fair dawn of your prosperity,
Look not to see the brightness of its day.
'Twill be o'ercast throughout !

Gaylove. My lord, I'm struck !

Clifford. You gave the first blow, and the hardest one !
Look, Sir : if swords you needs must measure, I'm your mate
Not he.

Walter. I'm mate for any man.

Clifford. Draw off your friend, my lord, for your own sake!

Wilford. Come, Gaylove! let's have another room.

Gaylove. With all my heart, since 'tis your lordship's will.

Wilford. That's right! Put up! Come friends?

[*Exeunt WILFORD and FRIENDS.*]

Walter. I'll follow him!

Why do you hold me? 'Tis not courteous of you!

Think'st thou I fear them? Fear! I rate them but

As dust! dross! offals! Let me at them!—Nay,

Call you this kind? then kindness know I not;

Nor do I thank you for't! Let go, I say!

Clifford. Nay, Master Walter, they're not worth your wrath.

Walter. How know you me for master Walter? By

My hunchback, Eh!—My stilts of legs and arms,

The fashion more of ape's than man's? Aha!

So you have heard them too their savage gibes.

As I pass on, "There goes my Lord!" aha!

God made me, Sir, as well as them and you.

'Sdeath! I demand of you, unhand me, Sir.

Clifford. There, Sir, you're free to follow them? Go forth

And I'll go too: so on your wilfulness

Shall fall whate'er of evil may ensue.

Is't fit you waste your choler on a burr?

The nothings of the town; whose sport it is

To break their villain jests on worthy men.

The graver still the fitter! Fie for shame!

Regard what such would say? So would not I,

No more than heed a cur.

Walter. Your're right, Sir; right,

For twenty crowns! So there's my rapier up!

You've done me a good turn against my will;

Which, like a wayward child, whose pet is off,

That made him restive under wholesome check,

I now right humbly own, and thank you for.

Clifford. No thanks, good Master Walter, owe you me!

I'm glad to know you, Sir.

Walter. I pray you, now,

How did you learn my name? Guess'd I not right?

Was't not my comely hunch that taught it you?

Clifford. I own it.

Walter. Right, I know it: you tell truth.

I like you for't.

But when I heard it said

That Master Walter was a worthy man,
Whose word would pass on change, soon as his bond;
A liberal man—for schemes of public good
That sets down tens, where others units write;
A charitable man—the good he does,
That's told of, not the half: I never more
Could see the hunch on Master Walter's back.

Walter. You would not flatter a poor citizen?

Clifford. Indeed, I flatter not!

Walter. I like your face:

A frank and honest one! Your frame's well knit,
Proportioned, shap'd!

Clifford. Good Sir!

Walter. Your name is Clifford—

Sir Thomas Clifford. Humph! You're not the heir
Direct, to the fair baronetcy? He

That was, was drown'd abroad. Am I not right?

Your cousin was't not? so, succeeded you

To rank and wealth, your birth ne'er promised you.

Clifford. I see you know my history.

Walter. I do.

You're lucky who conjoin the benefits

Of penury and abundance; for I know

Your father was a man of slender means.

You do not blush I see. That's right! Why should you?

What merit to be dropp'd on fortune's hill?

The honor is to mount it. You'd have done it;

For, you were train'd to knowledge, industry,

Frugality, and honesty,—the sinews

That surest help the climber to the top,

And keep him there. I have a clerk, Sir Thomas,

Once serv'd your father; there's the riddle for you.

Humph! I may thank you for my life to-day.

Clifford. I pray you say not so.

Walter. But I will say so!

Because I think so, know so, feel so, Sir!

Your fortune, I have heard I think, is ample;

And doubtless you live up to 't?

Clifford. 'Twas my rule,

And is so still, to keep my outlay, Sir,

A span within my means.

Walter. A prudent rule.

The turf is a seductive pastime!

Clifford. Yes.

Walter. You keep a racing stud? You bet?

Clifford. No, neither.

'Twas still my father's precept—"Better owe
A yard of land to labour, than to chance
Be debtor for a rood!"

Walter. 'Twas a wise precept.

You've a fair house—you'll get a mistress for it?

Clifford. In time.

Walter. In time! 'Tis time thy choice were made.
I'st not so yet? Or is thy lady love,
The newest still thou seest?

Clifford. Nay, not so.

I'd marry, Master Walter, but old use—
For, since the age of thirteen, I have lived
In the world,—has made me jealous of the thing
That flatter'd me with hope of profit. Bargains
Another would snap up, might be for me
'Till I had turn'd, and turn'd them! Speculations,
That promis'd twenty, thirty, forty, fifty,
Ay, cent. per cent. returns, I would not launch in
When others were afloat, and out at sea!
Whereby I made small gains, but miss'd great losses:
As ever then I look'd before I leap'd,
So do I now.

Walter. Thou'rt all the better for it!

Let's see! Hand free—heart whole—well favour'd—so!
Rich,—titled! Let that pass!—kind, valiant, prudent—
Sir Thomas, I can help thee to a wife,
Hast thou the luck to win her?

Clifford. Master Walter!

You jest!

Walter. I do not jest.—I like you! mark—
I like you, and I like not every one!
I say a wife, Sir, can I help you to,
The pearly texture of whose dainty skin
Alone were worth thy baronetcy! Form
And feature has she, wherein move and glow
The charms, that in the marble cold and still
Cull'd by the sculptor's jealous skill, and join'd there,
Inspire us! Sir, a maid, before whose feet
A duke—a duke might lay his coronet,
To lift her to his state, and partner her!
A fresh heart too! A young fresh heart, Sir, one,
That Cupid has not toy'd with, and a warm one.

Fresh, young, and warm! mark that! a mind to boot.
Wit, Sir; sense, taste;—a garden strictly tended—
Where nought but what is costly flourishes.
A consort for a king, Sir! Thou shalt see her.

Clifford. I thank you, Master Walter! As you speak,
Methinks I see me at the altar foot,
Her hand fast lock'd in mine—the ring put on
My wedding bell rings merry in my ear;
And round me throng glad tongues that give me joy
To be the bridegroom of so fair a bride!

Walter. What! sparks so thick? We'll have a blaze anon!

SERVANT (*entering.*)

The chariot's at the door.

Walter. It waits in time!

Sir Thomas, it shall bear thee to the bower
Where dwells this fair, for she's no city belle,
But e'en a Sylvan Goddess.

Clifford. Have with you.

Walter. You'll bless the day you serv'd the Hunchback,
Sir! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—A GARDEN BEFORE A COUNTRY HOUSE.

Enter JULIA and HELEN.

Helen. I like not, Julia, this, your country life.
I'm weary on't!

Julia. Indeed? So am not I!
I know no other; would no other know.

Helen. You would no other know! Would you not know
Another relative?—another friend—
Another house—another any thing,
Because the ones you have already please you?
That's poor content! Would you not be more rich,
More wise, more fair? The song that last you learn'd
You fancy well; and therefore shall you learn
No other song? Your virginals, 'tis true,
Hath a sweet tone; but does it follow thence,
You shall not have another virginals?
You may, love, and a sweeter one; and so
A sweeter life may find, than this you lead!

Julia. I seek it not. Helen, I'm constancy!

Helen. So is a cat, a dog, a silly hen,
An owl, a bat,—where they are wont to lodge

That still sojourn, nor care to shift their quarters.
Thou'rt constancy? I'm glad I know thy name!
The spider comes of the same family,
That in his meshy fortress spends his life,
Unless you pull him down, and scare him from it.
And so thou'rt constancy? Art proud of that?
I'll warrant thee I'll match thee with a snail
From year to year that never leaves his house!
Such constancy forsooth!—A constant grub
That houses ever in the self-same nut
Where he was born, 'till hunger drives him out,
Or plunder breaketh thro' his castle wall!
And so, in very deed, thou'rt constancy!

Julia. Helen, you know the adage of the tree!—
I've ta'en the bend. This rural life of mine,
Enjoin'd me by an unknown father's will,
I've led from infancy. Debarr'd from hope
Of change, I ne'er have sigh'd for change. The town
To me was like the moon, for any thought
I e'er should visit it—nor was I school'd
To think it half so fair!

Helen. Not half so fair!
The town's the sun, and thou hast dwelt in night
E'er since thy birth, not to have seen the town!
Their women there are queens, and kings their men;
Their houses palaces!

Julia. And what of that?
Have your town palaces a hall like this?
Couches so fragrant? walls so high adorn'd?
Casements with such festoons, such prospect, Helen,
As these fair vistas have? Your kings and queens!
See me a May-day queen, and talk of them!

Helen. Extremes are ever neighbours. 'Tis a step
From one to the other! Were thy constancy
A reasonable thing—a little less.
Of constancy—a woman's constancy—
I should not wonder wert thou ten years hence
The maid I know thee now; but, as it is,
The odds are ten to one, that this day year
Will see our May-day queen a city one.

Julia. Never! I'm wedded to a country life:
O, did you hear what Master Walter says!
Nine times in ten, the town's a hollow thing,
Where what things are is nought to what they show;

Where merit's name laughs merit's self to scorn !
Where friendship and esteem that ought to be
The tenants of men's hearts, lodge in their looks
And tongues alone. Where little virtue, with
A costly keeper, passes for a heap ;
A heap for none, that has a homely one !
Where fashion makes the law—your umpire which
You bow to, whether it has brains or not.
Where Folly taketh off his cap and bells,
To clap on Wisdom, which must bear the jest !
Where, to pass current you must seem the thing,
The passive thing, that others think, and not
Your simple, honest, independent self !

Helen. Ay : so says Master Walter. See I not
What you can find in Master Walter, Julia,
To be so fond of him !

Julia. He's fond of me.
I've known him since I was a child. E'en then
The week I thought a weary, heavy one,
That brought not Master Walter. I had those
About me then that made a fool of me,
As children oft are fool'd ; but more I lov'd
Good Master Walter's lesson than the play
With which they'd surfeat me. As I grew up,
More frequent Master Walter came, and more
I lov'd to see him. I had tutors then,
Men of great skill and learning—but not one
That taught like Master Walter. What they'd show me,
And I, dull as I was, but doubtful saw,—
A word from Master Walter made as clear
As day-light ! When my schooling days were o'er—
That's now good three years past—three years—I vow
I'm twenty, Helen !—well, as I was saying,
When I had done with school, and all were gone,
Still Master Walter came ; and still he comes,
Summer or winter—frost or rain. I've seen
The snow upon a level with the hedge,
Yet there was Master Walter !

Helen. Who comes here ?
A carriage, and a gay one,—who alights ?
Pshaw ! Only Master Walter ! What see you,
Which thus repairs the arch of the fair brow,
A frown was like to spoil ?—A gentleman !
One of our town kings. Mark—how say you now ?
Would'st be a town queen, Julia ? Which of us,

I wonder, comes he for ?

Julia. For neither of us ;

He's Master Walter's clerk, most like.

Helen. Most like !

Mark him as he comes up the avenue ;

So looks a clerk ! A clerk has such a gait !

So does a clerk dress, Julia,—mind his hose—

'They're very like a clerk's ! a diamond loop

And button, note you, for his clerkship's hat,—

O, certainly a clerk ! A velvet cloak,

Jerkin of silk, and doublet of the same,

For all the world a clerk ! See, Julia, see,

How Master Walter bows, and yields him place,

That he may first go in,—a very clerk !

I'll learn of thee, love, when I'd know a clerk.

Julia. I wonder who he is.

Helen. Would'st like to know ?

Would'st, for a fancy, ride to town with him ?

I prophecy he comes to take thee thither.

Julia. He ne'er takes me to town. No, Helen, no,
To town who will—a country life for me !

Helen. We'll see.

Enter FATHOM.

Fathom. You're wanted, Madam.

Julia. (*embarrassed.*) Which of us ?

Fathom. You, madam.

Helen. Julia ! what's the matter ? Nay,

Mount not the rose so soon. He must not see it.

A month hence. 'Tis love's flower, which once she wears,
The maid is all his own.

Julia. Go to !

Helen. Be sure

He comes to woo thee ! He will bear thee hence ;

He'll make thee change the country for the town.

Julia. I'm constancy. Name he the town to me,
I'll tell him what I think on't !

Helen. Then you guess
He comes a wooing ?

Julia. I guess nought.

Helen. You do !

At your grave words, your lips more honest, smile,
And show them to be traitors. Hie to him.

Julia. Hie thee to soberness.

Helen. Ay, will I, when

[*Exit.*

Thy bridemaid, I shall hie to church with thee.

Well Fathom, who is come?

Fathom. I know not.

Helen. What!

Did'st thou not hear his name?

Fathom. I did.

Helen. What is't?

Fathom. I noted not.

Helen. What hast thou ears for then?

Fathom. What good were it for me to mind his name?

I do but what I must do. To do that

Is labour quite enough!

Walter. (*without.*) What, Fathom!

Fathom. Here.

Walter. (*entering.*) Here, sirrah! Wherefore did'st not come to me?

Fathom. You did not bid me come.

Walter. I call'd thee.

Fathom. Yes,

And I said, "Here;" and waited then to know

Your worship's will with me.

Walter. We go to town.

Thy mistress, thou, and all the house.

Fathom. Well, Sir?

Walter. Mak'st thou not ready then to go to town?

Hence, knave, despatch!

Exit Fathom.

Helen. Go we to town?

Walter. We do;

'Tis now her father's will she sees the town.

Helen. I'm glad on't. Goes she to her father?

Walter. No:

At the desire of thine, she for a time

Shares roof with thee.

Helen. I'm very glad on't.

Walter. What!

You like her then? I thought you would. 'Tis time

She sees the town.

Helen. It has been time for that

These six years.

Walter. By thy wisdom's count. No doubt

You've told her what a precious place it is.

Helen. I have.

Walter. I even guess'd as much. For that
I told thee of her; brought thee here to see her;

And pray'd thee to sojourn a space with her ;
That its fair face, from thy too fair report,
Might strike a novice less,—so less deceive her.
I did not put thee under check.

Helen. 'Twas right,—
Else had I broken loose, and run the wilder !
So knows she not her father yet : that's strange,
I prithee how does mine ?

Walter. Well—very well.
News for thee.

Helen. What ?

Walter. Thy cousin is in town.

Helen. My cousin Modus ?

Walter. Much do I suspect
That cousin's nearer to the heart than blood.

Helen. Pshaw ! Wed me to a musty library !
Love him who nothing loves but Greek and Latin !
But, Master Walter, you forget the main
Surpassing point of all ! Who's come with you ?

Walter. Ay, that's the question !

Helen. Is he soldier or
Civilian ? lord or gentleman ? He's rich,
If that's his chariot ! Where is his estate ?
What brings it in ? Six thousands pounds a year ?
Twelve thousand, may be ! Is he bachelor,
Or husband ? Bachelor I'm sure he is !
Comes he not hither wooing, Master Walter ?
Nay, prithee, answer me !

Walter. Who says thy sex
Are curious ? That they're patient, I'll be sworn ;
And reasonable—very reasonable—
To look for twenty answers in a breath !
Come, thou shalt be enlightened—but propound
Thy questions one by one ! Thou'rt far too apt
A scholar ! My ability to teach
Will ne'er keep pace, I fear, with thine to learn.

Exeunt.

SCENE III.—AN APARTMENT IN THE HOUSE.

Enter JULIA, followed by CLIFFORD.

Julia. No more ! I pray you, Sir, no more !

Clifford. I love you.

Julia. You mock me, Sir.

Clifford. Then is there no such thing
On earth as reverence. Honour filial, the fear
Of kings, the awe of supreme heaven itself,
Are only shows and sounds that stand for nothing.
I love you!

Julia. You have known me scarce a minute.

Clifford. Say but a moment, still I say I love you.
Love's not a flower that grows on the dull earth;
Springs by the calendar; must wait for sun—
For rain;—matures by parts,—must take its time
To stem, to leaf, to bud, to blow. It owns
A richer soil, and boasts a quicker seed!
You look for it, and see it not; and lo!
E'en while you look, the peerless flower is up,
Consummate in the birth!

Julia. Is't fear I feel?

Why else should beat my heart? It can't be fear!
Something I needs must say. You're from the town;
How comes it, Sir, you seek a country wife?
Methinks 'twill tax his wit to answer that.

Clifford. In joining contrasts lieth love's delight.
Complexion, stature, nature, mateth it,
Not with their kinds, but with their opposites.
Hence hands of snow in palms of russet lie:
The form of Hercules affects the sylph's;
And breasts that ease the lion's fear-proof heart,
Find their lov'd lodge in arms where tremors dwell!
Haply for this, on Afric's swarthy neck,
Hath Europe's priceless pearl been seen to hang,
That makes the orient poor! So with degrees.
Rank passes by the circlet-graced brow,
Upon the forehead bare of notelessness,
To print the nuptial kiss! As with degrees
So is't with habits, therefore I, indeed
A gallant of the town, the town forsake,
To win a country wife.

Julia. His prompt reply
My backward challenge shames! Must I give o'er?
I'll try his wit again. Who marries me
Must lead a country life.

Clifford. The life I'd lead!
But fools would fly from it; for O! 'tis sweet!
It finds the heart out, be there one to find;

And corners in't where store of pleasures lodge,
We never dream'd were there ! It is to dwell
'Mid smiles that are not neighbours to deceit :
Music whose melody is of the heart
And gifts that are not made for interest,
Abundantly bestowed, by nature's cheek,
And voice, and hand ! It is to live on life,
And husband it ! It is to constant scan
The handiwork of heaven ! It is to con
Its mercy, bounty, wisdom, power ! It is
To nearer see our God !

Julia. How like he talks
To Master Walter ! Shall I give it o'er ?
Not yet. Thou would'st not live one half a year !
A quarter might'st thou for the novelty
Of fields and trees ; but then it needs must be
In summer time, when they go dressed.

Clifford. Not it !
In any time—say winter ! Fields and trees
Have charms for me in very winter time.

Julia. But snow may clothe them then.

Clifford. I like them full
As well in snow !

Julia. You do ?

Clifford. I do !

Julia. But night !
Will hide both snow and them, and that sets in
Ere afternoon is out. A heavy thing,
A country fireside in a winter's night,
To one bred in the town,—where winter's said,
For sun of gaiety and sportiveness,
To beggar shining summer.

Clifford. I should like
A country winter's night especially !

Julia. You'd sleep by the fire.

Clifford. Not I ; I'd talk to thee.

Julia. You'd tire of that ?

Clifford. I'd read to thee.

Julia. And that !

Clifford. I'd talk to thee again.

Julia. And sooner tire
Than first you did, and fall asleep at last.
You'd never do to lead a country life.

Clifford. You deal too hardly with me ! Matchless maid,
As lov'd instructor brightens dullest wit,
Fear not to undertake the charge of me !
A willing pupil kneels to thee, and lays
His title and his fortune at your feet.

Julia. His title and his fortune !

Enter MASTER WALTER and HELEN.—JULIA, disconcerted, retires with the latter.—CLIFFORD rises.

Walter. So, Sir Thomas !

Aha ! you husband time ? well, was I right ?

Is't not the jewel that I told you 'twas ?

Would'st thou not give thine eyes to wear it ? Eh ?

It has an owner tho',—nay, start not,—one

That may be brought to part with't, and with whom

I'll stand thy friend—I will—I say, I will !

A strange man, Sir, and unaccountable :

But I can humour him—will humour him

For thy sake, good Sir Thomas, for I like thee.

Well, is't a bargain ? Come, thy hand upon it.

A word or two with thee. *(They retire. JULIA and HELEN come forward.)*

Julia. Go up to town !

Helen. Have I not said it ten times o'er to thee ?

But if thou lik'st it not, protest against it.

Julia. Not if 'tis Master Walter's will.

Helen. What then ?

Thou would'st not break thy heart for Master Walter ?

Julia. That follows not ?

Helen. What follows not ?

Julia. That I

Should break my heart, because we go to town.

Helen. Indeed !—O that's another matter. Well,

I'd e'en advise thee then to do his will ;

And ever after when I prophecy,

Believe me, Julia ! *(they retire. MASTER WALTER comes forward.)*

Enter FATHOM.

Fathom. So please you, Sir, a letter,—a post haste letter ! The bearer on horseback, the horse in foam—smoaking like a boiler at the heat—be sure a post haste letter !

Walter. Look to the horse and rider.

(Opens the letter and reads.)

What's this ? A testament addressed to me,

Found in his Lordship's escrutoire, and thence

Directed to be taken by no hand

But mine. My presence instantly required.

SIR THOMAS, JULIA, and HELEN come forward.

Come my mistresses,

You dine in town to-day. Your father's will

It is, my Julia, that you see the world,

And thou shalt see it in its best attire.

Its gayest looks—its riches finery

It shall put on for thee, that thou may'st judge

Betwixt it, and the rural life you've lived.
Business of moment I'm but just advis'd of,
Touching the will of my late noble master,
The Earl of Rochdale, recently deceas'd,
Commands me for a time to leave thee there.
Sir Thomas, hand her to the chariot. Nay,
I tell thee true. We go indeed to town !

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—AN APARTMENT IN MASTER HEARTWELL'S HOUSE.

Enter FATHOM and THOMAS.

Thomas. Well, Fathom, is thy mistress up?

Fathom. She is, Master Thomas, and breakfasted.

Thomas. She stands it well! 'Twas five, you say, when she came home; and wants it now three quarters of an hour of ten! Wait till her stock of country health is out.

Fathom. 'Twill come to that, Master Thomas, before she lives another month in town! three, four, five, six o'clock are now the hours she keeps. 'Twas otherwise with her in the country. There, my mistress used to rise what time she now lies down.

Thomas. Why, yes: she's changed since she came hither.

Fathom. Changed, do you say, Master Thomas? Changed forsooth! I know not the thing in which she is not changed, saving that she is still a woman. I tell thee there is no keeping pace with her moods. In the country she had none of them. When I brought what she asked for, it was "Thank you, Fathom," and no more to do; but now, nothing contents her. Hark ye! were you a gentleman, Master Thomas,—for then you know you would be a different kind of man,—how many times would you have your coat altered?

Thomas. Why, master Fathom, as many times as it would take to make it fit me.

Fathom. Good! But supposing it fitted thee at the first?

Thomas. Then would I have it altered not at all.

Fathom. Good! Thou would'st be a reasonable gentleman. Thou would'st have a conscience. Now hark to a tale about my lady's last gown. How many times, think you, took I it back to the sempstress?

Thomas. Thrice, may be.

Fathom. Thrice, may be! Twenty times, may be; and not a turn too many for the truth on't. Twenty times on the oath of the sempstress. Now mark me—can you count?

Thomas. After a fashion.

Fathom. You have much to be thankful for, Master Thomas; you London serving men know a world of things, which we in the country never dream of. Now mark:—three times took I it back for the flounce; twice for the sleeves; thrice for the tucker. How many times in all is that?

Thomas. Eight times to a fraction, Master Fathom.

Fathom. What a master of figures you are! Eight times—now

recollect that! And then found she fault with the trimmings. Now tell me how many times took I back the gown for the trimmings?

Thomas. Eight times more, perhaps!

Fathom. Ten times to a certainty. How many times makes that?

Thomas. Eighteen, Master Fathom, by the rule of addition.

Fathom. And how many times more will make twenty?

Thomas. Twice, by the same rule.

Fathom. Thou hast worked with thy pencil and slate, Master Thomas! Well, ten times, as I said, took I back the gown for the trimmings: and was she content after all? I warrant you no, or my ears did not pay for it. She wished, she said, that the slattern sempstress had not touched the gown, for nought had she done, but botched it. Now, what think you, what had the sempstress done to the gown?

Thomas. To surmise that, I must be learned in the sempstress's art.

Fathom. The sempstress's art! Thou hast hit it! Oh, the sweet sempstress! The excellent sempstress! Mistress of her scissors and needles, which are pointless and edgeless to her art! The sempstress had done nothing to the gown, yet raves and storms my mistress at her for having botched it in the making and mending; and orders her straight to make another one, which home the sempstress brings on Tuesday last.

Thomas. And found thy fair mistress as many faults with that?

Fathom. Not one! She finds it a very pattern of a gown! A well sitting flounce! The sleeves a fit—the tucker a fit—the trimmings her fancy to a T—ha! ha! ha! and she praised the sempstress—ha! ha! ha! and she smiles at me, and I smile—ha! ha! ha! and the sempstress smiles—ha! ha! ha! Now why did the sempstress smile?

Thomas. That she had succeeded so well in her art.

Fathom. Thou hast hit it again. The jade must have been born a sempstress. If ever I marry she shall work for my wife. The gown was the same gown, and there was my mistress's twentieth mood!

Thomas. What think you will Master Walter say when he comes back? I fear he'll hardly know his country maid again. Has she yet fixed her wedding-day?

Fathom. She has, Master Thomas. I coaxed it from her maid. She marries, Monday week.

Thomas. Comes not Master Walter back to-day?

Fathom. Your master expects him. (*A ringing.*) Perhaps that's he. I prithee go and open the door; do, Master Thomas, do; for proves it my master, he'll surely question me.

Thomas. And what should I do?

Fathom. Answer him, Master Thomas, and make him none the wiser. He'll go mad, when he learns how my lady flaunts it! Go! open the door, I prithee. Fifty things, Master Thomas, know you, for one thing that I know; you can turn and twist a matter into any other kind of matter, and then twist and turn it back again, if needs be; so much you servants of the town beat us of the country, Master Thomas. Open the door, now; do, Master Thomas, do!

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—A GARDEN WITH TWO ARBOURS.

Enter MASTER HEARTWELL and MASTER WALTER, meeting.

Heartwell. Good Master Walter, welcome back again!

Walter. I'm glad to see you, Master Heartwell.

Heartwell. How,

I pray you, sped the weighty business which
So sudden called you hence?

Walter. Weighty, indeed!

What thou would'st ne'er expect—wilt scarce believe!

Long hidden wrong, wondrously come to light,

And great right done! But more of this, anon.

Now of my ward discourse! Likes she the town?

How does she? Is she well? Can'st match me her,

Amongst your city maids?

Heartwell. Ner court ones neither!

She far outstrips them all!

Walter. I knew she would.

What else could follow in a maid so bred?

A pure mind, Master Heartwell!—not a taint

From intercourse with the distemper'd town;

With which all contact was wall'd out; until,

Matured in soundness, I could trust her to it,

And sleep amidst infection.

Heartwell. Master Walter!

Walter. Well?

Heartwell. Tell me, prithee, which is likelier

To plough a sea in safety?—he that's wont

To sail in it,—or he that by the chart

Is master of its soundings, bearings,—knows

Its headlands, havens, currents,—where 'tis bold,

And where behoves to keep a good look out.

The one will swim where sinks the other one?

Walter. The drift of this?

Heartwell. Do you not guess it?

Walter. Humph!

Heartwell. If you would train a maid to live in town,

Breed her not in the country!

Walter. Say you so?

And stands she not the test?

Heartwell. As snow stands fire!

Your country maid has melted all away,

And plays the city lady to the height:—

Her mornings gives to mercers, milliners,

Shoemakers, jewellers, and haberdashers;

Her noons, to calls; her afternoons, to dressing;

Evenings, to plays and drums; and nights, to routs,

Balls, masquerades! Sleep only ends the riot,

Which waking still begins!

Walter. I'm all amaze !
How bears Sir Thomas this ?

Heartwell. Why, patiently ?
Though one can see with pain.

Walter. She loves him ? Ha !
That shrug is doubt ! She'd ne'er consent to wed him,
Unless she loved him !—never ! Her young fancy
The pleasures of the town—new things—have caught.
Anon their hold will slacken ; she'll become
Her former self again ; to its old train
Of sober feelings will her heart return ;
And then she'll give it wholly to the man,
Her virgin wishes chose !

Heartwell. Here comes Sir Thomas :
And with him Master Modus.

Walter. Let them pass :
I would not see him till I speak with her.

[*They retire into one of the arbours.*]

Enter CLIFFORD and MODUS.

Clifford. A dreadful question is it, when we love,
To ask if love's returned ! I did believe
Fair Julia's heart was mine—I doubt it now.
But once last night she danced with me, her hand
To this gallant and that engaged, as soon
As asked for ! Maid that loved would scarce do this !
Nor visit we together as we used ;
When first she came to town. She loves me less
Than once she did—or loves me not at all.

Modus. I'm little skilled, Sir Thomas, in the world :
What mean you now to do ?

Clifford. Remonstrate with her ;
Come to an understanding, and, at once,
If she repents her promise to be mine,
Absolve her from it—and say farewell to her.

Modus. Lo, then, your opportunity—she comes,—
My cousin also :—her will I engage,
Whilst you converse together.

Clifford. Nay, not yet !
My heart turns coward at the sight of her.
Stay 'till it finds new courage ! Let them pass.

[*CLIFFORD and MODUS retire into the other arbour.*]

Enter JULIA and HELEN.

Helen. So, Monday week will say good morn to thee
A maid, and bid good night a sober wife !

Julia. That Monday week, I trust, will never come,
That brags to make a sober wife of me !

Helen. How chang'd you are, my Julia !

Julia. Change makes change.

Helen. Why wed'st thou then?

Julia. Because I promis'd him.

Helen. Thou lov'st him?

Julia. Do I?

Helen. He's a man to love:

A right, well favour'd man!

Julia. Your point's well-favoured.

Where did you purchase it? In Gracechurch-street?

Helen. Pshaw! never mind my point, but talk of him.

Julia. I'd rather talk with thee about the lace.

Where bought you it? In Gracechurch-street, Cheapside,

Whitechapel, Little Britain? Can't you say

Where 'twas you bought the lace?

Helen. In Cheapside, then.

And now then to Sir Thomas! He is just

The height I like a man.

Julia. Thy feather's just

The height I like a feather! Mine's too short!

What shall I give thee in exchange for it?

Helen. What shall I give thee for a minute's talk
About Sir Thomas?

Julia. Why, thy feather.

Helen. Take it!

Clifford. (*aside to Modus.*) What, likes she not to speak of me!

Helen. And now

Let's talk about Sir Thomas—much I'm sure

He loves you.

Julia. Much I'm sure he has a right!

Those know I who would give their eyes to be

Sir Thomas, for my sake!

Helen. Such, too, know I.

But 'mong them none that can compare with him,

Not one so graceful.

Julia. What a graceful set

Your feather has!

Helen. Nay give it back to me,

Unless you pay me for't.

Julia. What was't to get?

Helen. A minute's talk with thee about Sir Thomas.

Julia. Talk of his title, and his fortune then.

Clifford. (*aside.*) Indeed! I would not listen, yet I must!

Julia. An ample fortune, Helen—I shall be

A happy wife! What routs, what balls, what masques,

What gala days!

Clifford. (*aside.*) For these she marries me!

She'll talk of these!

Julia. Think not, when I am wed,

I'll keep the house as owlet does her tower,

Alone,—when every other bird's on wing,
I'll use my palfrey, Helen; and my coach:
My barge too for excursions on the Thames;
What drives to Barnet, Hackney, Islington!
What rides to Epping, Hounslow, and Blackheath!
What sails to Greenwich, Woolwich, Fulham, Kew!
I'll set a pattern to your lady wives!

Clifford. Ay, lady? Trust me, not at my expense.

Julia. And what a wardrobe! I'll have change of suits
For every day in the year! and sets for days!
My morning dress, my noon dress, dinner dress,
And evening dress! then will I shew you lace
A foot deep, can I purchase it; if not
I'll speedily bespeak it. Diamonds too!
Not buckles, rings, and ear-rings only,—but
Whole necklaces and stomachers of gems!
I'll shine! be sure I will.

Clifford. (*aside.*) Then shine away;
Who covets thee may wear thee; I'm not he!

Julia. And then my title! Soon as I put on
The ring, I'm Lady Clifford. So I take
Precedence of plain mistress, were she e'en
The richest heiress in the land! At town
Or country ball, you'll see me take the lead,
While wives that carry on their back the wealth
To dower a princess, shall give place to me;—
Will I not profit, think you, by my right?
Be sure I will! marriage shall prove to me
A never ending pageant. Every day
Shall show how I am spous'd! I will be known
For Lady Clifford all the city through,
And fifty miles the country round about.
Wife of Sir Thomas Clifford, baronet,—
Not perishable knight! who, when he makes
A lady of me, doubtless must expect
To see me play the part of one.

Clifford. (*coming forward*) Most true.
But not the part which you design to play.

Julia. A list'ner, Sir!

Clifford. By chance, and not intent.
Your speech was forced upon mine ear, that ne'er
More thankless duty to my heart discharg'd!
Would for that heart it ne'er had known the sense
Which tells it 'tis a bankrupt there, where most
It coveted to be rich, and thought it was so!
O Julia! is it you? Could I have set
A coronet upon that stately brow,
Where partial nature hath already bound
A brighter circlet—radiant beauty's own—

I had been proud to see thee proud of it,—
 So for the donor thou had'st ta'en the gift,
 Not for the gift ta'en him. Could I have pour'd
 The wealth of richest Cræsus in thy lap,
 I had been blest to see thee scatter it,
 So I was still thy riches paramount!

Julia. Know you me, Sir?

Clifford. I do! On Monday week,
 We were to wed, and are, so you're content
 The day that weds, wives you to be widowed. Take
 The privilege of my wife: be Lady Clifford!
 Outshine thy title in the wearing on't!
 My coffers, lands, are all at thy command;
 Wear all! but, for myself, she wears not me,
 Although the coveted of every eye,
 Who would not wear me for myself alone.

Julia. And do you carry it so proudly, Sir?

Clifford. Proudly, but still more sorrowfully, Lady!
 I'll lead thee to the church on Monday week.
 Till then, farewell! and then,—farewell for ever!
 O Julia, I have ventured for thy love,
 As the bold merchant, who, for only hope
 Of some rich gain, all former gains will risk.
 Before I asked a portion of thy heart,
 I perill'd all my own; and now, all's lost!

[*Exit CLIFFORD.*]

Julia. Helen!

Helen. What ails you, sweet!

Julia. I cannot breathe, quick, loose my girdle, ho! (*faints.*)

MASTER WALTER and MASTER HEARTWELL
come forward.

Walter. Good Master Heartwell help to take her in,
 Whilst I make after him! and look to her!
 Unlucky chance, that took me out of town.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE III.—THE STREET.

Enter CLIFFORD and STEPHEN, meeting.

Stephen. Letters, Sir Thomas.

Clifford. Take them home again,
 I shall not read them now.

Stephen. Your pardon, Sir,
 But here is one directed strangely.

Clifford. How?

Stephen. "To Master Clifford, gentleman; now stiled
 Sir Thomas Clifford, baronet."

Clifford. Indeed!

Whence comes that letter?

Stephen. From abroad.

Clifford. Which is it?

Stephen. So please you this, Sir Thomas.

Clifford. Give it me.

Stephen. That letter brings not news, to wish him joy upon. If he was disturbed before, which I guessed by his looks he was, he is not more at ease now. His hand to his head! A most unwelcome letter! If it brings him news of disaster, fortune does not give him his deserts; for never waited servant upon a kinder master.

Clifford. Stephen!

Stephen. Sir Thomas!

Clifford. From my door remove
The plate that bears my name.

Stephen. The plate, Sir Thomas!

Clifford. The plate—collect my servants and instruct them
To make out each, their claims, unto the end
Of their respective terms, and give them in
To my steward. Him and them apprise, good fellow,
That I keep house no more. As you go home
Call at my coachmaker's, and bid him stop
The carriage I bespoke. The one I have
Send with my horses to the mart whereat
Such things are sold by auction. They're for sale—
Pack up my wardrobe—have my trunks convey'd
To the Inn in the next street—and when that's done,
Go round my tradesmen and collect their bills,
And bring them to me, at the Inn.

Stephen. The Inn!

Clifford. Yes; I go home no more. Why, what's the matter?
What has fallen out to make your eyes fill up?
You'll get another place. I'll certify
You're honest and industrious, and all
That a servant ought to be.

Stephen. I see, Sir Thomas,
Some great misfortune has befallen you?

Clifford. No!

I have health; I have strength; my reason, Stephen, and
A heart that's clear in truth, with trust in God.
No great disaster can befall the man
Who's still possessed of these! Good fellow, leave me,
What you would learn, and have a right to know,
I would not tell you now. Good Stephen, hence!
Mischance has fallen on me—but what of that?
Mischance has fallen on many a better man.
I prithee leave me. I grow sadder while
I see the eye with which you view my grief,
'Sdeath they will out! I would have been a man,

Had you been less a kind and gentle one.

Now, as you love me, leave me.

Stephen. Never master
So well deserv'd the love of him that serv'd him.

[*Exit STEPHEN.*]

Clifford. Misfortune liketh company ; it seldom
Visits its friends alone. Ha, Master Walter,
And ruffled too ! I'm in no mood for him.

Enter MASTER WALTER.

Walter. So, Sir !—Sir Thomas Clifford !—what with speed
And choler—I do gasp for want of breath !

Clifford. Well, Master Walter ?

Walter. You're a rash young man, Sir ?
Strong-headed, and wrong-headed—and I fear, Sir,
Not over delicate in that fine sense
Which men of honour pride themselves upon.

Clifford. Well, Master Walter !

Walter. A young woman's heart, Sir,
Is not a stone to carve a posey on !
Which knows not what is writ on't—which you may buy ;
Exchange or sell, Sir,—keep or give away, Sir :
It is a richer—yet a poorer thing :
Priceless to him that owns and prizes it ;
Worthless when own'd, not priz'd ; which makes the man
That covets it, obtains it, and discards it,—
A fool, if not a villain, Sir !

Clifford. Well, Sir !

Walter. You never lov'd my ward, Sir !

Clifford. The bright Heavens
Bear witness that I did !

Walter. The bright Heavens, Sir,
Bear not false witness. That you lov'd her not ;
Is clear,—for had you lov'd her, you'd have pluck'd
Your heart from out your breast, 'ere cast her from your heart !
Old as I am, I know what passion is.
It is the summer's heat, Sir, which in vain
We look for frost in—Ice, like you, Sir, knows
But little of such heat ! We are wrong'd, Sir ; wrong'd !
You wear a sword, and so do I !

Clifford. Well, Sir !

Walter. You know the use, Sir, of a sword ?

Clifford. I do.

To whip a knave, Sir, or an honest man ;
A wise man or a fool—atone for wrong,
Or double the amount on't ! Master Walter,
Touching your ward, if wrong is done, I think
On my side lies the grievance. I would not say so
Did I not think so. As for love—look, Sir,
That hand's a widower's, to its first mate sworn

To clasp no second one. As for amends, Sir,
You're free to get them from a man in whom
You've been forestall'd by fortune, for the spite
Which she has vented on him, if you still
Esteem him worth your anger. Please you read
That letter. Now, Sir, judge if life is dear,
To one so much a loser.

Walter. What, all gone!
Thy cousin living they reported dead!

Clifford. Title and land, Sir, unto which add love;
All gone, save life and honour, which ere I'll lose
I'll let the other go!

Walter. We're public here,
And may be interrupted. Let us seek
Some spot of privacy. Your letter, Sir! (*Gives it back.*)
Tho' fortune slights you, I'll not slight you! not
Your title or the lack of it I heed.
Whether upon the score of love or hate
With you and you alone I settle, Sir.
We've gone too far. 'Twere folly now to part
Without a reckoning.

Clifford. Just as you please.

Walter. You've done
A noble lady wrong.

Clifford. That lady, Sir,
Has done me wrong.

Walter. Go to! Thou art a boy
Fit to be trusted with a plaything, not
A woman's heart. Thou know'st not what it is!
Which I will prove to thee, soon as we find
Convenient place. Come on, Sir! you shall get
A lesson that shall serve you for the rest
Of your life. I'll make you own her, Sir, a piece
Of Nature's handiwork, as costly, free
From bias, flaw, and fair as ever yet
Her cunning hand turn'd out. Come on, Sir!—come!

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—A DRAWING ROOM.

Enter LORD TINSEL and the EARL OF ROCHDALE.

Tinsel. Refuse a lord! A saucy lady this.
I scarce can credit it.

Rochdale.—She'll change her mind.
My agent, Master Walter, is her guardian.

Tinsel. How can you keep that Hunchback in his office?
He mocks you.

Rochdale. He is useful. Never heed him.
My offer now do I present through him.
He has the title deeds of my estates.
She'll listen to their wooing. I must have her.
Not that I love her, but that all allow
She's fairest of the fair.

Tinsel. Distinguish'd well:
'Twere most unseemly for a Lord to love!
Leave that to commoners. 'Tis vulgar—she's
Betroth'd, you tell me, to Sir Thomas Clifford.

Rochdale. Yes.

Tinsel. That a commoner should thwart a Lord!
Yet not a commoner. A Baronet
Is fish and flesh. Nine parts plebeian, and
Patrician in the tenth. Sir Thomas Clifford!
A man, they say, of brains. I abhor brains
As I do tools! They're things mechanical.
So far are we above our forefathers:—
They to their brains did owe their titles, as
Do lawyers, doctors. We to nothing owe them,
Which makes us far the nobler.

Rochdale. Is it so?

Tinsel. Believe me. You shall profit by my training;
You grow a Lord apace. I saw you meet
A bevy of your former friends, who fain
Had shaken hands with you. You gave them fingers!
You're now another man. Your house is chang'd,—
Your table chang'd—your retinue—your horse—

Where once you rode a hack, you now back blood;—
Befits it then you also change your friends!

Enter WILLIAMS.

Williams. A gentleman would see your lordship,

Tinsel. Sir!

What's that?

Williams. A gentleman would see his lordship.

Tinsel. How know you, Sir, his lordship is at home?

Is he at home because he goes not out?

He's not at home, though there you see him, Sir,

Unless he certifies that he's at home!

Bring up the name of the gentleman, and then

Your lord will know if he's at home, or not. [*Exit Williams.*]

Your man was porter to some merchant's door,

Who never taught him better breeding

Than to speak the vulgar truth! Well, Sir?

WILLIAMS having re-entered.

Williams. His name,

So please your lordship, Markham.

Tinsel. Do you know

The thing?

Rochdale. Right well! I'faith a hearty fellow,

Son to a worthy tradesman, who would do

Great things with little means; so enter'd him

In the Temple. A good fellow on my life,

Nought smacking of his stock!

Tinsel. You've said enough!

His lordship's not at home. (*Exit Williams.*) We do not go

By hearts, but orders! Had he family—

Blood—tho' it only were a drop—his heart

Would pass for something; lacking such desert,

Were it ten times the heart it is, 'tis nought!

Enter WILLIAMS.

Williams. One Master Jones hath ask'd to see your lordship.

Tinsel. And what was your reply to Master Jones?

Williams. I knew not if his lordship was at home.

Tinsel. You'll do. Who's Master Jones?

Rochdale. A curate's son.

Tinsel. A curate's? Better be a yeoman's son!

Was it the rector's son, he might be known,

Because the rector is a rising man,

And may become a bishop. He goes light.
The curate ever hath a loaded back.
He may be call'd the yeoman of the church
That sweating does his work, and drudges on
While lives the hopeful rector at his ease.
How made you his acquaintance, pray?

Rochdale. We read
Latin and Greek together.

Tinsel. Dropping them—
As, now that you're a lord, of course you've done—
Drop him.—You'll say his lordship's not at home.

Williams. So please your lordship, I forgot to say,
One Richard Cricket likewise is below.

Tinsel. Who? Richard Cricket! You must see him,
Rochdale!

A noble little fellow! A great man, Sir!
Not knowing whom, you would be nobody!
I won five thousand pounds by him!

Rochdale. Who is he?
I never heard of him.

Tinsel. What! never heard
Of Richard Cricket! never heard of him!
Why, he's the jockey of Newmarket; you
May win a cup by him, or else a sweepstakes.
I bade him call upon you. You must see him.
His lordship is at home to Richard Cricket.

Rochdale. Bid him wait in the anti-room. [*Exit Williams.*]

Tinsel. The anti-room!
The best room in your house! You do not know
The use of Richard Cricket! Show him, Sir,
Into the drawing-room. Your lordship needs
Must keep a racing stud, and you'll do well
To make a friend of Richard Cricket. Well, Sir,
What's that?

Enter WILLIAMS.

Williams. So please your lordship, a petition.

Tinsel. Had'st not a service 'mong the Hottentots
Ere thou cam'st hither, friend? Present thy lord
With a petition! At mechanics' doors,
At tradesmens', shopkeepers', and merchants' only,
Have such things leave to knock! Make thy lord's gate
A wicket to a workhouse! Let us see it—
Subscriptions to a book of poetry!

Who heads the list? Cornelius Tense, A. M.,
Which means he construes Greek and Latin, works
Problems in mathematics, can chop logic,
And is a conjuror in philosophy,
Both natural and moral.—Pshaw! a man
Whom nobody, that is, any body, knows.
Who think you follows him? Why an M. D.
An F. R. S., an F. A. S., and then
A. D. D., Doctor of Divinity,
Ushering in an LL. D., which means
Doctor of Laws—their harmony no doubt
The difference of their trades! There's nothing here
But languages, and sciences, and arts,
Not an iota of nobility!

We cannot give our names. Take back the paper,
And tell the bearer there's no answer for him:—
That is the lordly way of saying “No.”
But, talking of subscriptions, here is one
To which your lordship may affix your name.

Rochdale. Pray who's the object?

Tinsel. A most worthy man!

A man of singular deserts; a man
In serving whom, your lordship will serve me,—
Signor Cantata.

Rochdale. He's a friend of yours?

Tinsel. O, no, I know him not! I've not that pleasure.
But Lady Dangle knows him; she's his friend.
He will oblige us with a set of concerts,
Six concerts to the set.—The set three guineas.
Your lordship will subscribe?

Rochdale. O, by all means.

Tinsel. How many sets of tickets? Two at least.
You'll like to take a friend? I'll set you down
Six guineas to Signor Cantata's concerts.
And now, my Lord, we'll to him,—then we'll walk.

Rochdale. Nay, I would wait the lady's answer.

Tinsel. Wait!

Take an excursion to the country; let
Her answer wait for you.

Rochdale. Indeed!

Tinsel. Indeed!

Befits a lord nought like indifference.
Say an estate should fall to you, you'd take it,
As it concerned more a stander by

Than you. As you're a lord, be sure you ever
Of that make little, other men make much of;
Nor do the thing they do, but the right contrary.
Where the distinction else 'twixt them and you?

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—AN APARTMENT IN MASTER HEARTWELL'S
HOUSE.

(MASTER WALTER *discovered looking through title-deeds and papers.*)

So falls out every thing as I would have it,
Exact in place and time. This lord's advances
Receives she,—as, I augur, in the spleen
Of wounded pride she will,—my course is clear.
She comes—all's well—the tempest rages still.

JULIA enters and paces the room in a state of high excitement.

Julia. What have my eyes to do with water? Fire
Becomes them better!

Walter. True.

Julia. Yet, must I weep
To be so monitor'd, and by a man!
A man that was my slave! whom I have seen
Kneel at my feet from morn till noon, content
With leave to only gaze upon my face,
And tell me what he read there,—till the page
I knew by heart, I 'gan to doubt I knew,
Emblazon'd by the comment of his tongue!
And he to lesson me! Let him come here
On Monday week! He ne'er leads me to church!
I would not profit by his rank, or wealth,
Tho' kings might call him cousin, for their sake!
I'll shew him I have pride!

Walter. You're very right!

Julia. He would have had to-day our wedding day!
I fix'd a month from this. He pray'd and pray'd,
I dropp'd a week. He pray'd and pray'd the more!
I dropp'd a second one. Still more he pray'd!
And I took off another week,—and now
I have his leave to wed, or not to wed!
He'll see that I have pride!

Walter. And so he ought.

Julia. O! for some way to bring him to my foot!
But he should lie there! Why, 'twill go abroad,

That he has cast me off. That there should live
The man could say so! Or that I should live
To be the leavings of a man!

Walter. Thy case
I own a hard one.

Julia. Hard! 'Twill drive me mad!
His wealth and title! I refused a lord—
I did! that privily implored my hand,
And never cared to tell him on't! So much
I hate him now, that lord should not in vain
Implore my hand again!

Walter. You'd give it him?

Julia. I would.

Walter. You'd wed that lord!

Julia. That lord I'd wed;—
Or any other lord,—only to show him
That I could wed above him!

Walter. Give me your hand
And word to that.

Julia. There! Take my hand and word!

Walter. That lord hath offered you his hand again.

Julia. He has?

Walter. Your father knows it: he approves of him.
There are the title deeds of the estates,
Sent for my jealous scrutiny. All sound,—
No flaw, or speck, that e'en the lynx-eyed law
Itself could find. A lord of many lands!
In Berkshire half a county; and the same
In Wiltshire, and in Lancashire! Across
The Irish Sea a principality!
And not a rood with bond or lien on it!
Wilt give that lord a wife? Wilt make thyself
A countess? Here's the proffer of his hand.
Write thou content, and wear a coronet!

Julia. (*eagerly.*) Give me the paper.

Walter. There! Here's pen and ink.
Sit down. Why do you pause? A flourish of
The pen, and you're a countess.

Julia. My poor brain
Whirls round and round! I would not wed him now,
Were he more lowly at my feet to sue
Than e'er he did!

Walter. Wed whom?

Julia. Sir Thomas Clifford:

Walter. You're right.

Julia. His rank and wealth are roots to doubt;
And while they lasted, still the weed would grow,
Howe'er you pluck'd it. No! That's o'er—That's done!
Was never lady wrong'd so foul as I! (*Weeps.*)

Walter. Thou'rt to be pitied.

Julia. (*aroused.*) Pitied! Not so bad
As that.

Walter. Indeed thou art, to love the man
That spurns thee!

Julia. Love him! Love! If hate could find
A word more harsh than its own name, I'd take it,
To speak the love I bear him! (*Weeps.*)

Walter. Write thy own name,
And show *him* how near a kin thy hate's to hate.

Julia. (*writes.*) 'Tis done!

Walter. 'Tis well! I'll come to you anon! [*Exit.*

Julia. (*alone*) I'm glad 'tis done! I'm very glad 'tis
done!

I've done the thing I ought. From my disgrace
This lord shall lift me 'bove the reach of scorn—
That idly wags its tongue, where wealth and state
Need only beckon to have crowds to laud!
Then how the tables change! The hand he spurn'd
His betters take! Let me remember that!
I'll grace my rank! I will! I'll carry it
As I was born to it! I warrant none
Shall say it fits me not:—but, one and all
Confess I wear it bravely, as I ought!
And he shall hear it! ay? and he shall see it!
I will roll by him in an equipage
Would mortgage his estate—but he shall own
His slight of me was my advancement! Love me!
He never lov'd me! if he had, he ne'er
Had given me up! Love's not a spider's web
But fit to mesh a fly—that you can break
By only blowing on't! He never lov'd me!
He knows not what love is—or, if he does,
He has not been o'er chary of his peace!
And that he'll find when I'm another's wife,
Lost!—lost to him forever! Tears again!
Why should I weep for him? Who make their woes
Deserve them! what have I to do with tears?

Enter HELEN.

Helen. News! Julia, news!

Julia. What! is't about Sir Thomas?

Helen. Sir Thomas, say you? He's no more Sir Thomas?
That cousin lives, as heir to whom, his wealth
And title came to him.

Julia. Was he not dead?

Helen. No more than I am dead,

Julia. I would 'twere not so.

Helen. What say you, Julia?

Julia. Nothing!

Helen. I could kiss

That cousin! could'nt you, Julia?

Julia. Wherefore?

Helen. Why

For coming back to life again, as 'twere
Upon his cousin to revenge you.

Julia. Helen!

Helen. Indeed, 'tis true. With what a sorry grace
The gentleman will bear himself without
His title! Master Clifford! Have you not
Some token to return him? Some love letter?
Some broach? Some pin? Some anything? I'll be
Your messenger, for nothing but the pleasure
Of calling him, plain "Master Clifford."

Julia. Helen!

Helen. Or has he aught of thine? Write to him, Julia,
Demanding it! Do, Julia, if you love me;
And I'll direct it in a schoolboy's hand,
As round as I can write, "To Master Clifford."

Julia. Helen!

Helen. I'll think of fifty thousand ways
To mortify him! I've a twentieth cousin,
A care-for-nought at mischief. Him I'll set
With twenty other madcaps like himself,
To walk the streets the traitor most frequents,
And give him salutation as he passes—
"How do you, Master Clifford?"

Julia. (*highly incensed.*) Helen!

Helen. Bless me!

Julia. I hate you, Helen!

Enter MODUS.

Modus. Joy for you, fair lady!

Our baronet is now plain gentleman,
And hardly that, not master of the means
To bear himself as such! The kinsman lives
Whose only rumour'd death gave wealth to him,
And title. A hard creditor he proves,
Who keeps strict reckoning—will have interest,
As well as principal. A ruin'd man
Is now Sir Thomas Clifford.

Helen. I'm glad on't.

Modus. And so am I. A scurvy trick it was
He serv'd you, Madam. Use a lady so!
I merely bore with him. I never lik'd him.

Helen. No more did I. No, never could I think
He look'd his title.

Modus. No, nor acted it.
If rightly they report, he ne'er disburs'd,
'To entertain his friends, 'tis broadly said,
A hundred pounds in the year. He was most poor,
In the appointments of a man of rank.
Possessing wealth like his. His horses, hacks!
His gentleman, a footman! and his footman,
A groom! The sports that men of quality
And spirit countenance, he kept aloof from,
From scruple of economy, not taste,—
As racing and the like. In brief he lack'd
Those shining points that, more than name, denote
High breeding; and, moreover, was a man
Of very shallow learning.

Julia. Silence Sir!
For shame!

Helen. Why Julia!

Julia. Speak not to me! Poor!
Most poor! I tell you, Sir, he was the making
Of fifty gentlemen—each one of whom
Were more than peer for thee! His title, Sir!
Lent him no grace, he did not pay it back!
Tho' it had been the highest of the high
He would have look'd it, felt it, acted it,
As thou could'st ne'er have done! When found you out
You lik'd him not? It was not ere to day!
Or that base spirit I must reckon your's
Which smiles where it would scowl—can stoop to hate
And fear to show it! He was your better, Sir,
And is!—Ay, is! tho' stripp'd of rank and wealth

His nature's 'bove or fortune's love or spite,
To blazon or to blur it! (*Retires.*)

Modus. (*to Helen.*) I was told
Much to disparage him—I know not wherefore.

Helen. And so was I, and know as much the cause.

Enter MASTER WALTER with parchments.

Walter. Joy, my Julia!
Impatient love has foresight! Lo you here
The marriage deeds fill'd up, except a blank
To write your jointure. What you will, my girl!
Is this a lover? Look! Three thousand pounds
Per annum for your private charges! Ha!
There's pin money? Is this a lover? Mark
What acres, forests, tenements, are tax'd
For your revenue; and so set apart,
That finger cannot touch them, save thine own.
Is this a lover? What good fortune's thine!
Thou dost not speak; but, 'tis the way with joy!
With richest heart, it has the poorest tongue!

Modus. What great good fortune's this you speak of, Sir?

Walter. A coronet, Master Modus! You behold
The wife elect, Sir, of no less a man
Than the new Earl of Rochdale—heir of him
That's recently deceased.

Helen. My dearest Julia,
Much joy to you!

Modus. All good attend you, Madam!

Walter. This letter brings excuses from his lordship,
Whose absence it accounts for. He repairs
To his estate in Lancashire, and thither
We follow.

Julia. When, Sir?

Walter. Now. This very hour.

Julia. This very hour! Oh cruel! fatal haste!

Walter. "O cruel, fatal haste!" What meanest thou?
Have I done wrong to do thy bidding, then?
I have done no more. Thou wast an off-cast bride,
And would'st be an affianc'd one—thou art so!
Thou'dst have the slight that mark'd thee out for scorn,

Converted to a means of gracing thee—
It is so! If our wishes come too soon,
What can make sure of welcome? In my zeal
To win thee thine, thou know'st, at any time
I'd play the steed, whose will to serve his lord,
With his last breath gives his last bound for him!
Since only noon have I despatch'd what well
Had kept a brace of clerks, and more, on foot,
And then, perhaps, had been to do again!—
Not finish'd, sure, complete—the compact firm,
As fate itself had seal'd it!

Julia. Give you thanks!
Tho' 'twere my death! my death!

Walter. Thy death! Indeed,
For happiness like this, one well might die!
Take thy lord's letter! Well?

Enter THOMAS with a letter.

Thomas. This letter, Sir,
The gentleman that served Sir Thomas Clifford—
Or him that was Sir Thomas—gave to me
For mistress Julia.

Julia. Give it me! (*Throwing away the one she holds.*)

Walter. (*snatching it*) For what?
Would'st read it? He's a bankrupt? stripp'd of title
House, chattles, lands and all! A naked bankrupt,
With neither purse, nor trust! Would'st read his letter?
A beggar! Yea, a beggar! fasts, unless
He dines on alms! How durst he send thee a letter!
A fellow cut on this hand, and on that;
Bows and is cut again, and bows again!
Who pays you fifty smiles for half a one,—
And that given grudgingly! To send you letter!
I burst with choler! Thus I treat his letter!

(*Tears and throws it on the ground.*)

So! I was wrong to let him ruffle me;
He is not worth the spending anger on!
I prithee, Master Modus, use despatch,
And presently make ready for our ride.
You, Helen, to my Julia look—a change
Of dresses will suffice. She must have new ones,

Matches for her new state ! Haste, friends. My Julia !
Why stand you poring there upon the ground ?
Time flies. Your rise astounds you ? Never heed—
You'll play my lady countess like a queen !

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—A ROOM IN THE EARL OF ROCHDALE'S.

Enter HELEN.

Helen. I'M weary wandering from room to room ;
A castle after all is but a house—
The dullest one when lacking company !
Were I at home I could be company
Unto myself. I see not Master Walter,
He's ever with his ward. I see not her.
By Master Walter will she bide, alone.
My father stops in town. I can't see him.
My cousin makes his books his company.
I'll go to bed and sleep. No—I'll stay up
And plague my cousin into making love !
For, that he loves me, shrewdly I suspect.
How dull he is that hath not sense to see
What lies before him, and he'd like to find.
I'll change my treatment of him, Cross him, where
Before I used to humour him, He comes
Poring upon a book. What's that you read ?

Enter MODUS.

Modus. Latin, sweet cousin.

Helen. 'Tis a naughty tongue
I fear, and teaches men to lie.

Modus. To lie !

Helen. You study it. You call your cousin sweet,
And treat her as you would a crab, As sour
'Twould seem you think her, so you covet her !
Why how the monster stares, and looks about !
You construe Latin, and can't construe that.

Modus. I never studied women.

Helen. No ; nor men.

Else would you better know their ways ; nor read
In presence of a lady. (*Strikes the book from his hand.*)

Modus. Right you say,
And well you serv'd me cousin, so to strike
The volume from my hand. I own my fault ;
So please you,—may I pick it up again ?
I'll put it in my pocket !

Helen. Pick it up.

He fears me, as I were his grandmother !
What is the book ?

Modus. 'Tis Ovid's Art of Love.

Helen. That Ovid was a fool!

Modus. In what?

Helen. In that.

To call that thing an art, which art is none.

Modus. And is not love an art?

Helen. Are you a fool,
As well as Ovid? Love an art! No art
But taketh time and pains to learn. Love comes
With neither. Is't to hoard such grain as that,
You went to College? Better stay at home,
And study homely English.

Modus. Nay, you know not
The argument.

Helen. I don't? I know it better
Than ever Ovid did! The face, the form,—
The heart, the mind we fancy, cousin; that's
The argument! Why, cousin, you know nothing,
Suppose a lady were in love with thee,
Could'st thou, by Ovid, cousin, find it out?—
Could'st find it out, was't thou in love thyself?
Could Ovid, cousin, teach thee to make love?
I could, that never read him. You begin
With melancholy; then to sadness; then
To sickness; then to dying—but not die!
She would not let thee, were she of my mind;
She'd take compassion on thee. Then for hope;
From hope to confidence; from confidence
To boldness;—then you'd speak; at first entreat;
Then urge; then flout; then argue; then enforce;
Make prisoner of her hand; besiege her waist;
Threaten her lips with storming; keep thy word
And carry her! My sampler 'gainst thy Ovid!
Why cousin, are you frighten'd, that you stand
As you were stricken dumb? The case is clear,
You are no soldier. You'll ne'er win a battle.
You care too much for blows?

Modus. You wrong me there.
At School I was the champion of my form,
And since I went to College—

Helen. That for college!

Modus. Nay, hear me!

Helen. Well? What, since you went to college?
You know what men are set down for, who boast
Of their own bravery. Go on, brave cousin!
What, since you went to college? Was there not
One Quentin Halworth there? You know there was,
And that he was your master!

Modus. He my master!
Thrice was he worsted by me.

Helen. Still was he
Your master.

Modus. He allow'd I had the best!
Allow'd it, mark me! nor to me alone,
But twenty I could name.

Helen. And master'd you
At last! Confess it, cousin, 'tis the truth.
A proctor's daughter you did both affect—
Look at me and deny it! Of the twain
She more affected you;—I've caught you now;
Bold cousin! Mark you! opportunity
On opportunity she gave you, Sir,
Deny it if you can!—but tho' to others,
When you discours'd of her, you were a flame;
To her you were a wick that would not light,
Tho' held in the very fire! And so he won her—
Won her, because he woo'd her like a man.
For all your cuffings, cuffing you again
With most usurious interest. Now, Sir;
Protest that you are valiant!

Modus. Cousin Helen!

Helen. Well, Sir?

Modus. The tale is all a forgery!

Helen. A forgery!

Modus. From first to last, ne'er spoke I
To a proctor's daughter while I was at college:

Helen. 'Twas a scrivener's then—or somebody's.
But what concerns it whose? Enough, you lov'd her,
And shame upon you, let another take her!

Modus. Cousin, I tell you, if you'll only hear me
I lov'd no woman while I was at college—
Save one, and her I fancied ere I went there.

Helen. Indeed! Now I'll retreat, if he's advancing.
Comes he not on! O what a stock's the man?
Well, cousin?

Modus. Well! What more would'st-have me say?
I think I've said enough.

Helen. And so think I.
I did but jest with you. You are not angry?
Shake hands! Why, cousin, do you squeeze me so?

Modus. (*Letting her go.*) I swear I squeezcd you not!

Helen. You did not!

Modus. No,
I'll die if I did!

Helen. Why then you did not, cousin,
So let's shake hands again—(*he takes her hand as before*)
O go and now

Read Ovid! Cousin, will you tell me one thing.
Wore lovers ruffs in Master Ovid's time?
Behov'd him teach them then, to put them on:—

And that you have to learn. Hold up your head!
 Why cousin, how you blush. Plague on the ruff!
 I cannot giv't a set. You're blushing still!
 Why do you blush, dear cousin? So! 'twill beat me!
 I'll give it up.

Modus. Nay, prithee don't—try on!

Helen. And if I do, I fear you'll think me bold.

Modus. For what?

Helen. To trust my face so near to thine.

Modus. I know not what you mean.

Helen. I'm glad you don't!

Cousin, I own right well behav'd you are,
 Most marvellously well behav'd! They've bred
 You well at college. With another man
 My lips would be in danger! Hang the ruff!

Modus. Nay, give it up, nor plague thyself, dear cousin.

Helen. Dear fool! (*Throws the ruff on the ground.*)

I swear the ruff is good for just
 As little as its master! There!—'Tis spoil'd—
 You'll have to get another. Hie for it
 And wear it in the fashion of a wisp,
 Ere I adjust it for thee! Farewell cousin!
 You'd need to study Ovid's Art of Love.

[*Exit HELEN.*]

Modus—(solus.) Went she in anger! I will follow her,—
 No, I will not! Heigho! I love my cousin!
 O would that she loved me. Why did she taunt me
 With backwardness in love? What could she mean?
 Sees she I love her, and so laughs at me,
 Because I lack the front to woo her? Nay,
 I'll woo her then! Her lips shall be in danger,
 When next she trusts them near me! Look'd she at me
 To day, as never did she look before!
 A bold heart, Master Modus! 'Tis a saying,
 A faint one never won fair lady yet!
 I'll woo my cousin, come what will on't! Yes!
 (*Begins reading again, throws down the book.*)
 Hang Ovid's Art of love! I'll woo my cousin!

SCENE II.—THE BANQUETTING ROOM IN THE EARL OF ROCHDALE'S MANSION.

Enter MASTER WALTER and JULIA.

Walter. This is the banquetting room. Thou see'st as far
 It leaves the last behind, as that excels
 The former ones. All is proportion here
 And harmony! Observe! The massy pillars
 May well look proud to bear the gilded dome.
 You mark those full length portraits? They're the heads,

The stately heads, of his ancestral line.
Here o'er the feast they aptly still preside;
Mark those medallions! Stand they forth or not
In bold and fair relief? Is not this brave!

Julia—(abstractedly.) It is.

Walter. It should be so. To cheer the blood
That flows in noble veins is made the feast
That gladdens here. You see this drapery?
'Tis richest velvet! Fringe and tassels, gold!
Is not this costly?

Julia. Yes.

Walter. And chaste, the while?
Both chaste and costly?

Julia. Yes.

Walter. Come hither! There's a mirror for you. See!
One sheet from floor to ceiling! Look into it,
Salute its mistress! Dost not know her?

Julia—(sighing deeply.) Yes.

Walter. And sighest thou to know her? Wait until
To-morrow, when the banquet shall be spread
In the fair hall; the guests—already bid,
Around it; here, her lord; and there, herself;
Presiding o'er the cheer that hails him bridegroom,
And her the happy bride! Dost hear me?

Julia—(sighing still more deeply.) Yes.

Walter. These are the day rooms only, we have seen,
For public, and domestic uses kept.
I'll show you now the lodging rooms. (*Goes, then turns and observes*
JULIA standing perfectly abstracted.)

You're tired.

Let be 'till after dinner then. Yet one
I'd like thee much to see—the bridal chamber.

(*JULIA starts, crosses her hands upon her breast,
and looks upwards.*)

I see you're tired; yet is it worth the viewing,
If only for the tapestry which shows
The needle like the pencil glows with life;

(*Brings down chairs, they sit.*)

The story's of a page who lov'd the dame
He served—a princess!—Love's a heedless thing!
That never takes account of obstacles;
Makes plains of mountains, rivulets of seas,
That part it from its wish. So proved the page,
Who from a state so lowly looked so high,—
But love's a greater lackwit still than this.
Say it aspires—that's gain! Love stoops—that's loss!
You know what comes. The princess lov'd the page.
Shall I go on, or here leave off?

Julia. Go on.

Walter. Each side of the chamber shows a different stage

Of this fond page and fonder lady's love.*

First—no, it is not that.

Julia. O, recollect!

Walter. And yet it is.

Julia. No doubt it is. What is't?

Walter. He holds to her a salver, with a cup:
His cheek more mantling with his passion, than
The cup with the ruby wine. She heeds him not,
For too great heed of him:—but seems to hold
Debate betwixt her passion and her pride,
That's like to lose the day. You read it in
Her vacant eye, knit brow, and parted lips,
Which speak a heart too busy all within
To note what's done without. Like you the tale?

Julia. I list to every word.

Walter. The next side paints
The page upon his knee. He has told his tale;
And found that, when he lost his heart, he play'd
No losing game; but won a richer one!
There may you read in him, how love would seem
Most humble when most bold,—you question which
Appears to kiss her hand—his breath, or lips!
In her you read how wholly lost is she
Who trusts her heart to love. Shall I give o'er!

Julia. Nay, tell it to the end. Is't melancholy?

Walter. To answer that, would mar the story.

Julia. Right.

Walter. The third side now we come to.

Julia. What shews that?

Walter. The page and princess still. But stands her sire
Between them. Stern he grasps his daughter's arm,
Whose eyes like fountains play; while thro' her tears
Her passion shines, as, thro' the fountain drops,
The sun! His minions crowd around the page!
They drag him to a dungeon.

Julia. Hapless youth!

Walter. Hapless indeed, that's twice a captive! heart
And body both in bonds. But that's the chain,

* In representation, the passages following this are curtailed—and the scene runs as follows:—Master Walter continues—

The first side shows their passion in the dawn—

In the next side 'tis shining open day—

In the third there's clouding,—I but touch on these

To make a long tale brief, and bring thee to

The last side.

Julia.—What shows that?

Walter.—The fate of love

That will not be advised.—The scene's a dungeon,
It's tenant is the page—he lies in fetters.

Julia.—Hard!

Hard as the steel, the hands that put them on! &c.

Which balance cannot weigh, rule measure, touch
Define the texture of, or eye detect,
That's forged by the subtle craft of love!
No need to tell you that he wears it. Such
The cunning of the hand that plied the loom,
You've but to mark the straining of his eye,
To feel the coil yourself!

Julia. I feel't without!

You've finish'd with the third side; now the fourth!

Walter. It brings us to a dungeon, then.

Julia. The page,

The thrall of love, more than the dungeon's thrall,
Is there?

Walter. He is. He lies in fetters.

Julia. Hard!—

Hard as the steel, the hands that put them on.

Walter. Some one unrivets them!

Julia. The princess? 'Tis!

Walter. It is another page.

Julia. It is herself!

Walter. Her skin is fair; and his is berry-brown.
His locks are raven black; and her's are gold.

Julia. Love's cunning of disguises! spite of locks,
Skin, vesture,—it is she, and only she!

What will not constant woman do for love

That's lov'd with constancy! Set her the task,

Virtue approving, that will baffle her!

O'er tax her stooping, patience, courage, wit!

My life upon it, 'tis the princess' self,

Transform'd into a page!

Walter. The dungeon door
Stands open, and you see beyond—

Julia. Her father!

Walter. No; a steed.

Julia. (*starting up.*) O, welcome steed,
My heart bounds at the thought of thee! Thou com'st
To bear the page from bonds, to liberty.
What else?

Walter. (*rising.*) The story's told.

Julia. Too briefly told;

O happy princess, that had wealth and state
To lay them down for love? Whose constant love
Appearances approv'd, not falsified!

A winner in thy loss as well as gain.

Walter. Weighs love so much?

Julia. What would you weigh 'gainst love,
That's true? Tell me with what you'd turn the scale?
Yea, make the index waver? Wealth? A feather!
Rank? Tinsel against bullion in the balance!
The love of kindred? That to set 'gainst love!

Friendship comes nearest to it; but put it in,
 Friendship will kick the beam!—weigh nothing 'gainst it!
 Weigh love against the world!
 Yet are they happy that have nought to say to it.

Walter. And such a one art thou. Who wisely wed,
 Wed happily. The love thou speak'st of
 A flower is only, that its season has
 Which they must look to see the withering of,
 Who pleasure in its budding and its bloom!
 But wisdom is the constant evergreen
 Which lives the whole year through! Be that your flower?

Enter a SERVANT.

Well?

Servant. My Lord's secretary is without.
 He brings a letter for her ladyship,
 And craves admittance to her.

Walter. Show him in.

Julia. No!

Walter. Thou must see him. To show slight to him,
 Were slighting him that sent him. Show him in!

[*Exit SERVANT.*]

Some errand proper for thy private ear,
 Besides the letter, he may bring. What mean
 This paleness and this trembling? Mark me, Julia!
 If, from these nuptials, which thyself invited—
 Which, at thy seeking, came—thou would'st be freed,
 Thou hast gone too far! Receding were disgrace,
 Sooner than see thee suffer which, the hearts
 That love thee most, would wish thee dead! Reflect!
 Take thought! Collect thyself! With dignity
 Receive thy bridegroom's messenger! for sure
 As dawns to-morrow's sun, to-morrow night
 Sees thee a wedded bride!

[*Exit.*]

Julia. (alone.) A wedded bride!
 Is't a dream? Is't a phantasm? 'Tis
 Too horrible for reality! for aught else
 Too palpable! O would it were a dream!
 How would I bless the sun that wak'd me from it!
 I perish! Like some desperate mariner
 Impatient of a strange, and hostile land,
 Who rashly hoists his sail, and puts to sea,
 And being fast on reefs and quicksands borne,
 Essays in vain once more to make the land,
 Whence wind and current drive him,—I'm wreck'd
 By mine own act! What! no escape? no hope?
 None! I must e'en abide these hated nuptials!
 Hated!—Ay! own it, and then curse thyself!
 That mad'st the bane thou loathest—for the love
 Thou bearest to one, who never can be thine!

Yes—love! Deceive thyself no longer. False
 To say 'tis pity for his fall,—respect,
 Engender'd by a hollow world's disdain,
 Which hoots whom fickle fortune cheers no more!
 'Tis none of these: 'tis love—and if not love,
 Why then idolatry? Ay, that's the name
 To speak the broadest, deepest, strongest passion,
 That ever woman's heart was borne away by!
 He comes! Thou'dst play the lady,—play it now!

*Enter a SERVANT, conducting CLIFFORD, plainly attired as the EARL
 OF ROCHDALE'S Secretary.*

Servant. His lordship's secretary.

[*Exit Servant.*]

Julia. Speaks he not?

Or does he wait for orders to unfold
 His business? Stopp'd his business till I spoke,
 I'd hold my peace for ever! (*CLIFFORD kneels; presenting a letter.*)
 Does he kneel?

A lady am I to my heart's content!
 Could he unmake me that which claims his kneec,
 I'd kneel to him,—I would! I would!—Your will?

Clifford. This letter from my lord.

Julia. O fate! who speaks?

Clifford. The secretary of my lord.

Julia. I breathe!

I could have sworn 'twas he!

(*Makes an effort to look at him but is unable.*)

So like the voice—

I dare not look, lest there the form should stand!
 How came he by that voice? 'Tis Clifford's voice,
 If ever Clifford spoke! My fears come back—
 Clifford the secretary of my lord!
 Fortune hath freaks, but none so mad as that!
 It cannot be—it should not be!—a look,
 And all were set at rest.

(*Tries to look at him again but cannot.*)

So strong my fears,

Dread to confirm them takes away the power
 To try and end them!—Come the worst, I'll look.

(*She tries again; and again is unequal to the task.*)

I'd sink before him, if I met his eye!

Clifford. Will please your ladyship to take the letter?

Julia. There Clifford speaks again! Not Clifford's heart
 Could more make Clifford's voice! Not Clifford's tongue
 And lips more frame it into Clifford's speech!
 A question, and 'tis over! Know I you?

Clifford. Reverse of fortune, lady, changes friends?
 It turns them into strangers. What I am,
 I have not always been!

Julia. Could I not name you?

Clifford. If your disdain for one, perhaps too bold
When hollow fortune call'd him favourite,—
Now by her fickleness perforce reduced
'To take an humble tone, would suffer you—

Julia. I might?

Clifford. You might.

Julia. O Clifford! is it you?

Clifford. Your answer to my lord. (*Gives the letter.*)

Julia. Your lord! (*Mechanically taking it.*)

Clifford. Wilt write it?

Or, will it please you send a verbal one?

I'll bear it faithfully.

Julia. You'll bear it?

Clifford. Madam,

Your pardon, but my haste is somewhat urgent.

My lord's impatient, and to use despatch

Were his repeated orders.

Julia. Orders? Well,

I'll read the letter, Sir. 'Tis right you mind

His lordship's orders. They are paramount!

Nothing should supersede them!—stand beside them!

They merit all your care, and have it! Fit,

Most fit they should! Give me the letter, Sir.

Clifford. You have it, Madam.

Julia. So! How poor a thing

I look! so lost, while he is all himself!

Have I no pride? (*She rings, the Servant enters.*)

Paper, and pen and ink.

If he can freeze, 'tis time that I grow cold!

I'll read the letter. (*Opens it, and holds it as about to read it.*)

Mind his order! So!

Quickly he fits his habits to his fortunes!

He serves my lord with all his will! His heart's

In his vocation. So! Is this the letter?

'Tis upside down—and here I'm poring on't!

Most fit I let him see me play the fool!

Shame. Let me be myself!

(*A servant enters with materials for writing.*)

A table, Sir,

And chair.

(*The servant brings a table and chair, and goes out.*)

She sits awhile, vacantly gazing on the letter—then

looks at CLIFFORD.

How plainly shows his humble suit!

It fits nothim that wears it! I have wronged him!

He can't be happy—does not look it! is not.

That eye which reads the ground is argument

Enough! He loves me. There I let him stand,

And I am sitting!

(*Riscs, takes a chair, and approaches CLIFFORD.*)

Pray you take a chair. (*He bows as acknowledging, and declining the honour. She looks at him awhile.*)

Clifford, why don't you speak to me? (*She weeps.*)

Clifford. I trust

You're happy.

Julia. Happy! Very, very happy!

You see I weep, I am so happy! Tears

Are signs, you know, of nought but happiness!

When first I saw you, little did I look

To be so happy! Clifford!

Clifford. Madam?

Julia. Madam!

I call thee Clifford, and thou call'st me madam!

Clifford. Such the address my duty stints me to.

Thou art the wife elect of a proud Earl—

Whose humble secretary sole, am I.

Julia. Most right! I had forgot! I thank you, Sir,

For so reminding me; and give you joy,

That what, I see, had been a burthen to you,

Is fairly off your hands.

Clifford. A burthen to me!

Mean you yourself? Are you that burthen, Julia?

Say that the sun's a burthen to the earth!

Say that the blood's a burthen to the heart!

Say health's a burthen, peace, contentment, joy,

Fame, riches, honours! every thing that man

Desires, and gives the name of blessing to!—

E'en such a burthen, Julia were to me,

Had fortune let me wear her.

Julia (aside.) On the brink

Of what a precipice I'm standing! Back!

Back! while the faculty remains to do't!

A minute longer, not the whirlpool's self

More sure to suck thee down! One effort! There! (*She returns to her seat, recovers her self-possession, takes up the letter, and reads.*)

To wed to-morrow night! Wed whom? A man

Whom I can never love! I should before

Have thought of that. To-morrow night! This hour

To-morrow! How I tremble! Happy bands

To which my heart such freezing welcome gives,

As sends an ague through me! At what means

Will not the desperate snatch! What's honour's price?

Nor friends, nor lovers,—no, nor life itself!

Clifford! This moment, leave me! (*CLIFFORD retires up the stage, out of Julia's sight.*)

Is he gone!

O docile lover! Do his mistress wish

That went against his own! Do it so soon!—

Ere well 'twas utter'd! No good bye to her!

No word! no look! 'Twas best that so he went!
Alas, the strait of her, who owns that best,
Which last she'd wish were done! What's left me now?
To weep! To weep! (*Leans her head upon her arm, which rests
upon the desk,—her other arm hanging listless at
her side. CLIFFORD comes down the stage, looks a
moment at her, approaches her, and kneeling, takes
her hand.*)

Clifford. My Julia!

Julia. Here again,

Up! up! By all thy hopes of heaven go hence!
To stay's perdition to me! Look you, Clifford!
Were there a grave where thou art kneeling now,
I'd walk into 't, and be inearth'd alive,
Ere taint should touch my name! Should some one come
And see thee kneeling thus! Let go my hand!
Remember, Clifford, I'm a promis'd bride—
And take thy arm away! It has no right
To clasp my waist! Judge you so poorly of me,
As think I'll suffer this? My honour, Sir!
(*She breaks from him, quitting her seat.*)

I'm glad you've forc'd me to respect myself—
You'll find that I can do so!

Clifford. I was bold
Forgetful of your station and my own.
There was a time I held your hand unchid!
There was a time I might have clasp'd your waist—
I had forgot that time was past and gone!
I pray you, pardon me!

Julia—(softened.) I do so, Clifford.

Clifford. I shall no more offend.

Julia. Make sure of that.

No longer is it fit thou keep'st thy post
In's lordship's household. Give it up! A day—
An hour remain not in it!

Clifford. Wherefore?

Julia. Live

In the same house with me, and I another's?
Put miles, put leagues between us! The same land
Should not contain us. Oceans should divide us—
With barriers of constant tempests—such
As mariners durst not tempt! O Clifford!
Rash was the act so light that gave me up,
That stung a woman's pride, and drove her mad—
'Till in her phrensy, she destroy'd her peace!
O, it was rashly done! Had you reprov'd—
Expostulated,—had you reason'd with me—
Tried to find out what was indeed my heart,—
I would have shewn it—you'd have seen it. All
Had been as nought can ever be again!

Clifford. Lov'st thou me, Julia?

Julia. Dost thou ask me, Clifford?

Clifford. These nuptials may be shunn'd—

Julia. With honour!

Clifford. Yes.

Julia. Then take me! Stop—hear me, and take me then!

Let not thy passion be my counsellor!

Deal with me, Clifford, as my brother. Be

The jealous guardian of my spotless name!

Scan thou my cause as 'twere thy sister's! Let

Thy scrutiny o'erlook no point of it,—

Nor turn it over once, but many a time:

That flaw, speck, yea—the shade of one,—a soil

So slight, not one out of a thousand eyes

Could find it out,—may not escape thee; then

Say if these nuptials can be shunn'd with honour!

Clifford. They can.

Julia. Then take me, Clifford! (*They embrace.*)

Walter.—(*entering.*) Ha! What's this?

Ha! treason! What! my baronet that was,

My secretary now? Your servant, Sir!

Is't thus you do the pleasure of your lord,

That for your service, feeds you, clothes you, pays you?

Or tak'st that but the name of his dependant?

What's here?—a letter. Fifty crowns to one

A forgery! I'm wrong. It is his hand.

This proves the double traitor!

Clifford. Traitor!

Julia. Nay,

Control thy wrath, good Master Walter! Do,—

And I'll persuade him to go hence. (*MASTER WALTER retires up the stage.*) I see

For me thou bearest this, and thank thee, Clifford!

As thou hast truly shown thy heart to me.

So truly I to thee have open'd mine!

Time flies! To-morrow! If thy love can find

A way, such as thou said'st, for my enlargement,

By any means thou can'st, apprise me of it,—

And soon as shown, I'll take it.

Walter. Is he gone?

Julia. He is this moment! If thou covet'st me,

Win me, and wear me! May I trust thee? Oh!

If that's thy soul, that's looking thro' thine eye,

Thou lov'st me, and I may!—I sicken, lest

I never see thee more!

Clifford. As life is mine,

The ring that on thy wedding finger goes,

No hand but mine shall place there!

Walter. Lingers he?

Julia. For my sake, now away! And yet a word

By all thy hopes most dear, be true to me!
Go now! Yet stay! Clifford while you are here,
I'm like a bark distress'd, and compassless,
That by a beacon steers;—when you're away,
That bark alone, and tossing miles at sea!
Now go! Farewell! My compass—beacon—land!
When shall my eyes be bless'd with thee again!

Clifford. Farewell!

[*Exit.*

Julia. Ar't gone! All's chance—all's care—all's darkness!

[*Is led off by* MASTER WALTER.]

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—AN APARTMENT IN THE EARL OF
ROCHDALE'S.

Enter HELEN and FATHOM.

Fathom. The long and the short of it is this—if she marries this Lord, she'll break her heart! I wish you could see her, madam. Poor lady!

Helen. How looks she, prithee?

Fathom. Marry, for all the world like a dripping wet cambric handkerchief! She has no colour nor strength in her; and does nothing but weep—poor lady!

Helen. Tell me again what said she to thee?

Fathom. She offered me all she was mistress of to take the letter to Master Clifford. She drew her purse from her pocket—the ring from her finger—she took her very ear-rings out of her ears,—but I was forbidden, and refused. And now I'm sorry for it! Poor lady!

Helen. Thou should'st be sorry. Thou hast a hard heart, Fathom.

Fathom. I, madam! My heart is as soft as a woman's. You should have seen me when I came out of her chamber—poor lady!

Helen. Did you cry?

Fathom. No; but I was near it as possible. I a hard heart! I would do any thing to serve her, poor sweet lady!

Helen. Will you take her letter, asks she you again?

Fathom. No—I am forbid.

Helen. Will you help Master Clifford to an interview with her?

Fathom. No—Master Walter would find it out.

Helen. Will you contrive to get me into her chamber?

Fathom. No—you would be sure to bring me into mischief.

Helen. Go to! You would do nothing to serve her. You a soft heart! You have no heart at all! You feel not for her!

Fathom. But I tell you I do—and good right I have to feel for her. I have been in love myself.

Helen. With your dinner!

Fathom. I would it had been! My pain would have soon been over, and at little cost. A fortune I squandered upon her!—trinkets—trimmings—treatings—what swallowed up the revenue of a whole year! Wasn't I in love? Six months I courted her, and a dozen crowns all but one did I disburse for her in that time! Wasn't I in love? An hostler—a tapster—and a constable, courted her at the same time, and I offered to cudgel the whole three of them for her! Wasn't I in love?

Helen. You are a valiant man, Fathom.

Fathom. Am not I? Walks not the earth the man I am afraid of!

Helen. Fear you not Master Walter?

Fathom. No.

Helen. You do.

Fathom. I don't.

Helen. I'll prove it to you. You see him breaking your young mistress's heart, and have not the manhood to stand by her.

Fathom. What could I do for her?

Helen. Let her out of prison. It were the act of a man.

Fathom. That man am I!

Helen. Well said, brave Fathom!

Fathom. But my place!—

Helen. I'll provide thee with a better one.

Fathom. 'Tis a capital place! So little to do, and so much to get for't. Six pounds in the year; two suits of livery; shoes and stockings, and a famous larder. He'd be a bold man that would put such a place in jeopardy. My place, Madam, my place!

Helen. I tell thee I'll provide thee with a better place. Thou shalt have less to do, and more to get. Now, Fathom, hast thou courage to stand by thy mistress?

Fathom. I have!

Helen. That's right.

Fathom. I'll let my lady out.

Enter MASTER WALTER unperceived.

Helen. That's right. When, Fathom?

Fathom. To night.

Helen. She is to be married to night.

Fathom. This evening then. Master Walter is now in the library, the key is on the outside, and I'll lock him in.

Helen. Excellent! You'll do it?

Fathom. Rely upon it. How he'll stare when he finds himself a prisoner, and my young lady at liberty.

Helen. Most excellent! You'll be sure to do it?

Fathom. Depend upon me! When Fathom undertakes a thing, he defies fire and water—

Walter. (*coming forward.*) Fathom!

Fathom. Sir!

Walter. Assemble straight the servants.

Fathom. Yes, Sir!

Walter. Mind,

And have them in the hall when I come down.

Fathom. Yes, Sir!

Walter. And see you do not stir a step,
But where I order you.

Fathom. Not an inch, Sir!

Walter. See that you don't,—away! So, my fair mistress,
Exit FATHOM.]

What's this you have been plotting? An escape
For mistress Julia?

Helen. I avow it.

Walter. Do you?

Helen. Yes; and moreover to your face I tell you,
Most hardly do you use her.

Walter. Verily!

Helen. I wonder where's her spirit! Had she mine
She would not tak't so easily. Do you mean
To force this marriage on her?

Walter. With your leave.

Helen. You laugh.

Walter. Without it then. I don't laugh now.

Helen. If I were she, I'd find a way to escape.

Walter. What would you do?

Helen. I'd leap out of the window!

Walter. Your window should be barr'd.

Helen. I'd cheat you still!

I'd hang myself ere I'd be forced to marry!

Walter. Well said! you shall be married then, to-night.

Helen. Married to-night!

Walter. As sure as I have said it.

Helen. Two words to that. Pray who's to be my bride-
groom?

Walter. A daughter's husband is her father's choice.

Helen. My father's daughter ne'er shall wed such husband!

Walter. Indeed!

Helen. I'll pick a husband for myself.

Walter. Indeed!

Helen. Indeed, Sir; and indeed again!

Walter. Go dress you for the marriage ceremony.

Helen. But Master Walter, what is it you mean?

Enter MODUS.

Walter. Here comes your cousin;—he shall be your bridesman!

The thought's a sudden one,—that will excuse
Defect in your appointments. A plain dress,—
So 'tis of white,—will do.

Helen. I'll dress in black.
I'll quit the castle.

Walter. That you shall not do.
It's doors are guarded by my lord's domestics.
It's avenues—it's grounds: what you must do,
Do with a good grace. In an hour, or less,
Your father will be here. Make up your mind
To take with thankfulness the man he gives you.
Now, (*aside*) if they find not out how beat their hearts,
I have no skill, not I, in feeling pulses. [*Exit.*

Helen. Why, cousin Modus! What! will you stand by
And see me forced to marry? Cousin Modus,
Have you not got a tongue? Have you not eyes?
Do you not see I'm very—very ill,
And not a chair in all the corridor?

Modus. I'll find one in the study.

Helen. Hang the study!

Modus. My room's at hand. I'll fetch one thence.

Helen. You shan't!
I'll drop ere you come back!

Modus. What shall I do?

Helen. Why don't you offer to support me? Well?
Give me your arm—be quick! (*Modus offers his arm.*) Is
that the way

To help a lady when she's like to faint?

I'll drop unless you catch me! (*Modus supports her.*) That
will do;

I'm better now—(*Modus offers to leave her*) don't leave me!
Is one well

Because one's better? Hold my hand. Keep so.

I'll soon recover so you move not. Loves he (*aside*)

Which I'll be sworn he does, he'll own it now.

Well, cousin Modus?

Modus. Well! sweet cousin?

Helen. Well?

You heard what Master Walter said?

Modus. I did.

Helen. And would you have me marry? Can't you speak?
Say yes or no.

Modus. No, cousin.

Helen. Bravely said!

And why, my gallant cousin?

Modus. Why?

Helen. Ah, why?

Women you know are fond of reasons—why
Would you not have me marry? How you blush!
Is it because you do not know the reason?
You mind me of a story of a cousin
Who once her cousin such a question asked.
He had not been to college tho'—for books,
Had pass'd his time in reading ladies' eyes,
Which he could construe marvellously well,
Tho' writ in language all symbolical.
Thus stood they once together, on a day—
As we stand now—discoursed as we discourse,—
But with this difference,—fifty gentle words
He spoke to her, for one she spoke to him!—
What a dear cousin! well, as I did say,
As now I questioned thee, she questioned him:
And what was his reply? To think of it
Sets my heart beating—'twas so kind a one!
So like a cousin's answer—a dear cousin!
A gentle, honest, gallant, loving cousin!
What did he say? A man might find it out,
Though never read he Ovid's Art of Love.
What did he say? He'd marry her himself!
How stupid are you, cousin! Let me go!

Modus. You are not well yet?

Helen. Yes.

Modus. I'm sure you're not?

Helen. I'm sure I am.

Modus. Nay, let me hold you, cousin!

I like it.

Helen. Do you? I would wager you
You could not tell me why you like it. Well?

You see how true I know you : How you stare !

What see you in my face to wonder at ?

Modus. A pair of eyes !

Helen. At last he'll find his tongue—(*aside.*)

And saw you ne'er a pair of eyes before ?

Modus. Not such a pair.

Helen. And why ?

Modus. They are so bright !

You have a Grecian nose.

Helen. Indeed !

Modus. Indeed !

Helen. What kind of mouth have I ?

Modus. A handsome one.

I never saw so sweet a pair of lips !

I ne'er saw lips at all till now, dear cousin !

Helen. Cousin, I'm well,—you need not hold me now.

Do you not hear ? I tell you I am well !

I need your arm no longer—take't away !

So tight it locks me, 'tis with pain I breathe !

Let me go, cousin ! Wherefore do you hold

Your face so close to mine ? What do you mean ?

Modus. You've questioned me, and now I'll question you.

Helen. What what would you learn ?

Modus. The use of lips.

Helen. To speak.

Modus. Nought else ?

Helen. How bold my modest cousin grows !

Why, other use know you ?

Modus. I do !

Helen. Indeed !

You're wondrous wise ? And pray what is it ?

Modus. This ! (*attempts to kiss her.*)

Helen. Soft ! My hand thanks you cousin—for my lips

I keep them for a husband !—Nay, stand off !

I'll not be held in manacles again !

Why do you follow me ?

Modus. I love you cousin !

Helen. O cousin, say you so ! That's passing strange !

Falls out most crossly—is a dire mishap—

A thing to sigh for, weep for, languish for,

And die for !

Modus. Die for !

Helen. Yes, with laughter, cousin !

For truly I love you !

Modus. And you'll be mine?

Helen. I will.

Modus. Your hand upon it.

Helen. Hand and heart.

Hie to the dressing-room, and I'll to mine—

Attire thee for the altar—so will I.

Whoever may claim me, thou'rt the man shall have me.

Away! Despatch! But hark you, ere you go,

Ne'er brag of reading Ovid's Art of Love!

Modus. And cousin! stop—one little word with you!

(*She returns, he snatches a kiss.*)

[*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE II—JULIA'S CHAMBER.

Enter JULIA

Julia. No word from him, and evening now set in!

He cannot play me false! His messenger

Is dogged—or letter intercepted. I'm

Beset with spies!—No rescue!—no escape!

The hour at hand that brings my bridegroom home!

No relative to aid me! Friend to counsel me!

(*A knock at the door.*)

Come in.

Enter TWO FEMALE ATTENDANTS.

Your will?

First Attendant. Your toilet waits, my lady,

'Tis time you dress.

Julia. 'Tis time I die! (*A peal of bells.*) What's that?

First Attendant. Your wedding bells, my lady.

Julia. Merrily

They ring my knell! (*Second Attendant presents an open case.*)

And pray you what are these?

Second Attendant. Your wedding jewels.

Julia. Set them by.

Second Attendant. Indeed

Was ne'er a braver set! A necklace, brooch,

And ear-rings all of brilliants,—with a hoop

To guard your wedding ring.

Julia. 'Twould need a guard

That lacks a heart to keep it!

Second Attendant. Here's a heart

Suspended from the necklace—one huge diamond

Imbedded in a host of smaller ones !

Oh ! how it sparkles !

Julia. Show it me ! Bright heart,
Thy lustre, should I wear thee, will be false,—
For thou the emblem art of love and truth,—
From her that wears thee unto him that gives thee.
Back to thy case ! Better thou ne'er should'st leave it—
Better thy gems, a thousand fathoms deep
In their native mine again, than grace my neck,
And lend thy fair face to palm off a lie !

First Attendant. Wilt please you dress ?

Julia. Ay ! in infected clothes
New from a pest-house ! Leave me ! If I dress,
I'll dress alone. O ! for a friend ! Time gallops !

Exeunt ATTENDANTS.

He that should guard me is mine enemy !
Constrains me to abide the fatal die,
My rashness, not my reason cast ! He comes.
That will exact the forfeit ! Must I pay it ?—
E'en at the cost of utter bankruptcy !
What's to be done ? Pronounce the vow that parts
My body from my soul ! To what it loathes
Links that, while this is link'd to what it loves !
Condemn'd to such perdition ! What's to be done ?
Stand at the altar in an hour from this !
An hour thence seated at his board—a wife !
Thence !—phrensy's in the thought ! What's to be done ?

Enter MASTER WALTER.

Walter. What ! run the waves so high ? Not ready yet !
Your Lord will soon be here ! The guests collect.

Julia. Show me some way to 'scape these nuptials ! Do it !
Some opening for avoidance or escape,—
Or, to thy charge, I'll lay a broken heart !
It may be, broken vows, and blasted honour !
Or else a mind distraught !

Walter. What's this ?

Julia. The strait
I'm fallen into my patience cannot bear !
It frights my reason—warps my sense of virtue !
Religion ! changes me into a thing,
I look at with abhorring !

Walter. Listen to me !

Julia. Listen to me, and heed me! If this contract
Thou hold'st me to—abide thou the result!
Answer to heaven for what I suffer!—act!
Prepare thyself for such calamity
To fall on me, and those whose evil stars
Have link'd them with me, as no past mishap,
However rare, and marvellously sad
Can parrallel! Lay thy account to live
A smileless life, die an unpitied death—
Abhorr'd, abandoned of thy kind,—as one
Who had the guarding of a young maid's peace,—
Look'd on and saw her rashly peril it;
And when she saw her danger, and confess'd
Her fault, compell'd her to complete her ruin?

Walter. Hast done?

Julia. Another moment, and I have.
Be warn'd! Beware how you abandon me
To myself! I'm young, rash, inexperience'd! tempted
By most insufferable misery!
Bold, desperate, and reckless! Thou hast age,
Experience, wisdom, and collectedness,—
Power, freedom,—every thing that I have not,
Yet want, as none e'er wanted! Thou can'st save me,
Thou ought'st! thou must! I tell thee at his feet
I'll fall a corse—ere mount his bridal bed!
So choose betwixt my rescue and my grave:—
And quickly too! The hour of sacrifice
Is near! Anon the immolating priest
Will summon me! Devise some speedy means
To cheat the altar of its victim. Do it!
Nor leave the task to me!

Walter. Hast done?

Julia. I have.

Walter. Then list to me—and silently, if not
With patience.—(*brings chairs for himself and her.*)
How I watch'd thee from thy childhood,
I'll not recall to thee. Thy father's wisdom—
Whose humble instrument I was—directed
Your nonage should be pass'd in privacy,—
From your apt mind that far outstripp'd your years,
Fearing the taint of an infected world;—
For, in the rich ground, woods once taking root,
Grow strong as flowers. He might be right or wrong!
I thought him right; and therefore did his bidding.

Most certainly he lov'd you—so did I;
Ay! well! as I had been myself your father!

(His hand is resting upon his knee, Julia attempts to take it—he withdraws it—looks at her—she hangs her head.)

Well; you may take my hand! I need not say
How fast you grew in knowledge, and in goodness,—
That hope could scarce enjoy its golden dreams
So soon fulfilment realized them all!

Enough. You came to womanhood. Your heart,
Pure as the leaf of the consummate bud,
That's new unfolded to the smiling sun,
And ne'er knew blight nor canker!

(Julia attempts to place her other hand on his shoulder—he leans from her—looks at her—she hangs her head again.)

Put it there!

Where left I off? I know! When a good woman
Is fitly mated, she grows doubly good
How good so e'er before! I found the man
I thought a match for thee; and, soon as found
Propos'd him to thee. 'Twas your father's will,
Occasion offering, you should be married
Soon as you reach'd to womanhood.—You lik'd
My choice—accepted him.—We came to town;
Where, by important matter summon'd thence,
I left you an affianc'd bride!

Julia. You did!

You did! *(leans her head upon her hand, and weeps.)*

Walter. Nay, check thy tears! Let judgment now,
Not passion, be awake. On my return,
I found thee—what? I'll not describe the thing
I found thee then! I'll not describe my pangs
To see thee such a thing! The engineer
Who lays the last stone of his sea-built tower,
It cost him years and years of toil to raise,—
And, smiling at it, tells the winds and waves
To roar and whistle now—but, in a night,
Beholds the tempest sporting in its place—
May look aghast as I did!

Julia—(falling on her knees.) Pardon me!
Forgive me! pity me!

Walter. Resume thy seat. *(Raises her.)*
I pity thee; perhaps not thee alone
It fits to sue for pardon.

Julia. Me alone!
None other!

Walter. But to vindicate myself,
I name thy lover's stern desertion of thee.
What wast thou then with wounded pride? A thing
To leap into a torrent! throw itself
From a precipice! Rush into fire! I saw
Thy madness—knew to thwart it were to chafe it—
And humoured it to take that course, I thought,
Adopted, least 'twould rue!

Julia. 'Twas wisely done.

Walter. At least 'twas for the best!

Julia. To blame thee for it,
Was adding shame to shame! But, Master Walter!
These nuptials!—must they needs go on?

Servant. (*entering*) More guests,
Arrive.

Walter. Attend to them.

[*Exit Servant.*]

Julia. Dear Master Walter!

Is there no way to escape these nuptials?

Walter. Know'st not

What with these nuptials comes? Hast thou forgot?

Julia. What?

Walter. Nothing!—I did tell thee of a thing.

Julia. What was it?

Walter. To forget it was a fault!

Look back and think.

Julia. I can't remember it.

Walter. Fathers, make straws your children! Nature's
nothing!

Blood, nothing! Once in other veins it runs,
It no more yearneth for the parent flood,
Than doth the stream that from the stream disparts.
Talk not of love instinctive—what you call so,
Is but the brat of custom! your own flesh
By habit only cleaves to you—without,
Hath no adhesion! (*Aside.*) So, you have forgot
You have a father, and are here to meet him!

Julia. I'll not deny it.

Walter. You should blush for't.

Julia. No!

No! no! dear Master Walter! what's a father
That you've not been to me? Nay, turn not from me,
For at the name a holy awe I own,
That now almost inclines my knee to earth!
But thou to me, except a father's name,

Hast all the father been : the care—the love—
 The guidance—the protection of a father.
 Can'st wonder then, if like thy child I feel,—
 And feeling so, the father's claim forget
 Whom ne'er I knew, save by the name of father?
 Oh turn to me, and do not chide me : or
 If thou wilt chide, chide on ! but turn to me !

Walter. (struggling with emotion.) My Julia !

Embraces her.

Julia. Now, dear Master Walter, hear me !
 Is there no way to 'scape these nuptials ?

Walter. Julia,

A promise made, admits not of release,
 Save by consent or forfeiture of those
 Who hold it—so it should be ponder'd well
 Before we let it go.—'Ere man should say
 I broke the word I had the power to keep,
 I'd lose the life I have the power to part with !
 Remember, Julia, thou and I to-day,
 Must to thy father of thy training render
 A strict account. While honour's left to us,
 We have something—nothing, having all but that !
 Now for thy last act of obedience, Julia !
 Present thyself before thy bridegroom ! *(she assents.)* Good !
 My Julia's now herself ! Show him thy heart,
 And to his honour leav't to set thee free,
 Or hold thee bound. Thy father will be by !

Exeunt severally.

SCENE III.—THE BANQUETTING ROOM.

Enter MASTER WALTER and MASTER HEARTWELL.

Heartwell. Thanks, Master Walter ! Ne'er was child
 more bent

To do her father's will, you'll own, than mine :
 Yet never one more froward.

Walter. All runs fair—

Fair may all end ! To day you'll learn the cause
 That took me out of town. But soft awhile,
 Here comes the bridegroom, with his friends, and here
 The all obedient bride.

*Enter on one hand JULIA, and on the other LORD ROCHDALE with
 LORD TINSEL, and friends,—afterwards CLIFFORD.*

Rochdale. Is she not fair?

Tinsel. She'll do. Your servant, lady! Master Walter
We're glad to see you. Sirs, you're welcome all!
What wait they for? Are we to wed or not?
We're ready—why don't they present the bride?
I hope they know she is to wed an Earl.

Rochdale. Should I speak first?

Tinsel. Not for your coronet!

I, as your friend, may make the first advance.
We've come here to be married. Where's the bride?

Walter. There stands she, Lord; if 'tis her will to wed,
His lordship's free to take her.

Tinsel. Not a step!

I, as your friend, may lead her to your lordship.
Fair lady, by your leave.

Julia. No! not to you.

Tinsel. I ask your hand to give it to his lordship.

Julia. Nor to his lordship—save he will accept
My hand without my heart! but I'll present
My knee to him, and, by his lofty rank,
Implore him now to do a lofty deed
Will lift its stately head above his rank,—
Assert him nobler yet in worth than name,—
And, in the place of an unwilling bride,
Unto a willing debtor make him lord,—
Whose thanks shall be his vassals, night and day
That still shall wait upon him!

Tinsel. What means this?

Julia. What is't behoves a wife to bring her lord?

Walter. A whole heart, and a true one.

Julia. I have none!

Not half a heart—the fraction of a heart!
Am I a woman it befits to wed?

Walter. Why, where's thy heart?

Julia. Gone—out of my keeping!

Lost—past recovery! right and title to it—
And all given up! and he that's owner on't,
So fit to wear it, were it fifty hearts,
I'd give it to him all!

Walter. Thou dost not mean
His Lordship's secretary?

Julia. Yes. Away

Disguises! In that secretary know
The master of the heart, of which, the poor,
Unvalued, empty casket, at your feet,—
Its jewel gone,—I now despairing throw! (*Kneels.*)
Of his lord's bride he's lord! lord paramount!
To whom her virgin homage first she paid,—

'Gainst whom rebell'd in frowardness alone,—
Nor knew herself how loyal to him, till
Another claim'd her duty—then awoke
To sense of all she ow'd him—all his worth—
And all her undeservings!

Tinsel. Lady, we come not here to treat of hearts,—
But marriage; which, so please you, is with us
A simple joining, by the priest, of hands.
A ring's put on; a prayer or two is said;
You're man and wife,—and nothing more! For hearts,
We oft'ner do without, than with them, lady!

Clifford. So does not wed this lady.

Tinsel. Who are you?

Clifford. I'm secretary to the Earl of Rochdale.

Tinsel. My lord!

Rochdale. I know him not.

Tinsel. I know him now—
Your lordship's rival! Once Sir Thomas Clifford.

Clifford. Yes, and the bridegroom of that lady then.
Then lov'd her—loves her still!

Julia. Was lov'd by her—
Tho' then she knew it not!—is lov'd by her
As now she knows, and all the world may know!

Tinsel. We can't be laugh'd at. We are here to wed,
And shall fulfil our contract.

Julia. Clifford!

Clifford. Julia!
You will not give your hand?

(*A pause—JULIA seems utterly lost.*)

Walter. You have forgot
Again. You have a father!

Julia. Bring him now,—
To see thy Julia justify thy training,
And lay her life down to redeem her word!

Walter. And so redeems her all! Is it your will,
My Lord, these nuptials should go on?

Rochdale. It is.

Walter. Then is it mine they stop!

Tinsel. I told your lordship
You should not keep a Hunchback for your agent.

Walter. Thought like my father, my good lord, who said
He would not have a Hunchback for his son,—
So do I pardon you the savage slight!
My lord, that I am not as straight as you,
Was blemish neither of my thought nor will,
My head nor heart. It was no act of mine,—
Yet did it curdle nature's kindly milk
E'en where 'tis richest—in a parent's breast—
To cast me out to heartless fosterage,
Not heartless always, as it prov'd—and give

My portion to another! the same blood—
But I'll be sworn, in vein, my lord, and soul—
Although his trunk did swerve no more than yours—
Not half so straight as I.

Tinsel. Upon my life
You've got a modest agent, Rochdale! Now
He'll prove himself descended—mark my words—
From some small gentleman!

Walter. And so you thought,
Where nature played the churl, it would be fit
That fortune played it too. You would have had
My lord absolve me of my agency!
Fair lord, the flaw did cost me fifty times—
A hundred times my agency:—but all's
Recovered. Look, my lord, a testament
To make a pension of his lordship's rent roll!
It is my father's and was left by him,
In case his heir should die without a son,
Then to be opened. Heaven did send a son
To bless the heir. Heaven took its gift away.
He died—his father died. And Master Walter—
The unsightly agent of his lordship there—
The Hunchback whom your lordship would have stripped
Of his agency,—is now the Earl of Rochdale!

Tinsel. We've made a small mistake here. Never mind,
'Tis nothing in a lord.

Julia. The Earl of Rochdale!

Walter. And what of that? Thou know'st not half my greatness!
A prouder title, Julia, have I yet.
Sooner than part with which I'd give that up,
And be again plain Master Walter. What!
Dost thou not apprehend me? Yes, thou dost!
Command thyself---don't gasp! My pupil---daughter!
Come to thy father's heart!

(*JULIA rushes into his arms.*)

Enter FATHOM.

Fathom. Thievery! Elopement---escape---arrest!

Walter. What's the matter?

Fathom. Mistress Helen is running away with Master Modus.----
Master Modus is running away with Mistress Helen---but we have
caught them, secured them, and here they come, to receive the reward
of their merits.

Enter HELEN and MODUS, followed by Servants.

Helen. I'll ne'er wed man, if not my cousin Modus.

Modus. Nor woman I, save Cousin Helen's she.

Walter to Master Heartwell. A daughter have you, and a nephew too,
Without their match in duty! Let them marry.
For you, Sir, who to day have lost an earldom,

Yet would have shared that earldom with my child---
My only one---content yourself with prospect
Of the succession---it must fall to you.
And fit yourself to grace it. Ape not those
Who rank by pride. The man of simplest bearing
Is yet a lord, when he's a lord indeed!

Tinsel. The paradox is absolete. Ne'er heed!
Learn from his book, and practice out of mine!

Walter. Sir Thomas Clifford, take my daughter's hand!---
If now you know the master of her heart!
Give it my Julia! You shall know anon,
How jealousy of my mis-shapen back
Made me mistrustful of a child's affections---
Although I won a wife's---so that I dropped
The title of thy father, lest thy duty
Should pay the debt, thy love could solve alone.
All this and more, that to thy friends and thee
Pertains, at fitting time thou shalt be told.
But now thy nuptials wait---the happy close
Of thy hard trial---wholesome, though severe!
The world won't cheat thee now---thy heart is proved:---
Thou know'st thy peace by finding out its bane
And ne'er wilt act from reckless impulse more!

END.

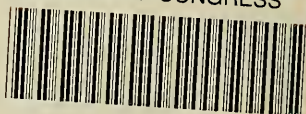
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